

SPIRITUALITY: WHAT IT IS?

श्री नवजीवन एवं सुश्री सुधा को
उनके प्रणय सूत्र बन्धन के पुनीत
पर्व पर सस्नेह

—: नित्यानन्द :—



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SPIRITUALITY
What It Is

by

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Dedicated

to the Almighty God

working through all Masters who have come

and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj

at whose lotus feet

the writer *imbibed sweet elixir of*

Holy Naam—the Word.

Dedicated

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and [illegible] Singh ji Maharaj

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To the Honest Seeker

"God is in the soul and the soul is in God, as the sea is in the fish and the fish is in the sea.

—St. Catherine

The term 'Spirituality' is hard to define. The scope and the extent of the subject is so vast and varied in its different aspects that it can hardly be put into so many words. Suffice it to say that it deals with the immutable and eternal facts of life—the active live principles that are enlivening the entire creation.

The quest for the 'Spirit' and for the 'Laws of Spirituality' has ever been in the human breast from the dawn of consciousness in man and with all its hoary antiquity, the subject retains its freshness as ever before and shall continue to do so. The Spirit or Soul is the vital flame in man, in the light and life of which he lives and has his being and no wonder that in every clime and in every age, the leaders of spiritual thought—the sages and seers, the saints and sadhs—have attempted to solve the mystery of life.

The subject of Spirituality is concerned purely with the problems connected with the Spirit or Soul—to wit, its origin or source, what it is, its seat in the body and its relation thereto, how it functions in the physical world, whether it is possible to separate it at will from the body and bodily adjuncts, the mind and the senses, and if so, the various processes connected therewith, the spiritual journey through different spiritual planes and the spirit's capability to traverse the same, the ultimate goal or destination to which this journey leads and other allied topics, like the welfare of the spirit, how to feed it and with what, for on its health depends the health of the mind and the body. These are some of the vital questions that fall in purview of our inquiry.

Spirituality is more a practical science than a mere theoretical dissertation. The various scriptures of the different religions of the world provide us with the theoretical aspect only and cannot give us a demonstrative experience of the Reality in the laboratory of the human body. Writings like the Vedas, the Upnishadas, the Avestha of the zorasterians, the Tripatakas of the Buddhists, the Gospels, the Quran, the Adi Granth, Triratanas of the Jains, and other canonical literature and extra-canonical works, with their commentaries etc. medieval and modern (the Mahabhasyas, the Angas and

Upangas etc.) all might point the Way but have no power to take us there. Their chief merit lies in the spade-work they do in creating an interest in the aspirants for Para-vidya or the Knowledge of the Beyond. But the Transcendental Experience can be gained only from a Living Master, a Murshid-i-Kamil, well versed and competent in the practical aspect of Spirituality. Life and Light can come only from the Living-impulse of a Master Saint, whose glance of grace is more than enough to quicken higher life in the disciple. The greatest teachers of humanity, make use, according to the individual needs of the disciple, of all the three methods : (i) Anva or Gross, that is, imparting spiritual instructions by word of mouth ; (ii) Shakta or subtle, that is, instilling higher spiritual consciousness in the disciple without his having to go through the external sadhan or discipline ; and (iii) Shambhava or Transcendental, that is, raising the disciple, in infinite mercy, to the highest stage of Realisation without his having to do anything at all. As an unerring guide on the inner spiritual path, he appears in his Radiant Form (Guru-Dev) and accompanies the spirit when it transcends the body consciousness while living or at the time of death, and as a veritable Master of Truth (Satguru) he works out the Divine Plan. The need of such a Master-soul who can atonce work on the various planes, as

Guru, Gurudev and Satguru, cannot be over-emphasised.

In nut-shell 'Spirituality' contents itself only with "Self-Realisation" and "God-Realisation." It has therefore nothing to do with institutionalised religions or religiosity, the show of religion as we mostly make of, now-a-days.

Spirituality may be distinguished from sectarianism. While most of the great religions of the world tend to become more and more sectarian in their outlook, spirituality ever remains universal, with its appeal to people of all the religions who can come to and join this Studium Generale or the Universal Mystery School for practical training. As opposed to the sealed or codified religions, spirituality is an open book of God with living touch of the Masters who present it from age to age in the spirit of the age. In this scientific age, it is presented as any other science with mathematical precision and results verifiable on scientific lines.

The term Spirituality is not to be confused with, (i) Spiritism or belief in the existence of spirits apart from the matter, which when disembodied haunt the nether regions as ghosts or the lower planes of the astral regions as angels. (ii) Spiritualism or belief in the survival of human personality and in communication between the living and those who have 'passed on' in the form of spirit rapping and planchet writing etc.

(iii) Mesmerism or producing a state of trance by the consciously exerted 'animal magnetism' of the operator so as to subordinate the will-power of his subject. (iv) Hypnotism which produces a kind of deep sleep in which the consciousness is suspended and the patient is made susceptible to the suggestions of the hypnotist. Spirituality, on the contrary is the science of developing Higher Consciousness in Man, on the level of the soul and making one transcend from mere body consciousness into cosmic consciousness and further on into Super Consciousness so as to enable one to understand the working of the Divine Plan.

With these few words, I would request the seeker after Truth to carefully peruse and study the pages that follow so as to understand the true significance of the most important and yet mostly neglected subject, the subject of Spirituality.

Sawan Ashram,
Delhi.

Kirpal Singh



SPIRITUALITY

Man is older than all philosophies and religions, which in fact were originally intended, and later on fashioned and developed for his moral and spiritual well-being so that he may ultimately attain salvation or freedom from the bondage of mind and matter. But in spite of riches, moral codes, and the vast acquisition of learning, knowledge and wisdom, he is not really satisfied with life, because he has not been able to realise the Fundamental Truth of Love which lies at the core of all religions.

God made man and man made religions. Religions then, are for man and not man for religions. The various religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and others came into existence in course of time, to serve the primary human need according to the exigencies of the then prevailing conditions. If we travel back along the stream of time, we find no trace of the Sikhs beyond five hundred years ago, of the Muslims beyond fourteen hundred years, of the Christians beyond two thousand years, and of the Buddhists

and the Jains beyond five or six thousand years. Before the advent of the Aryan tribes many races appeared and disappeared on the scene of life. But man has ever remained a man, the lord of created things, in all times and in all climes, whether in the east or in the west, always and everywhere the same, an ensouled body or embodied soul with no distinctions of caste, creed or colour, in his essential nature, the inner self in him being of the same essence as of God.

Kabir says :

"The spirit in man is of the same essence as of the All-Pervading Spirit." —Gond Kabir

Sheikh Saadi says :

"All creatures are products from one and the same *Jauhar* (Essence)

Every country and every age has had its sages and seers. Corruption and deterioration are the natural features of time, and prophets appear time and again to set the things in order. All religions owe their birth to the teachings of such Master-souls. The aim and purpose of the various religious orders has ever been the same—to provide a Way-back to God, to find the missing link between God and man. These are thus means to an end and not end in themselves. But in actual practice we find that none of them affords any high degree of satisfaction. The fault lies not with the

religions but with those who minister them to the people.

True religion: Universal love and remembrance of God:

What is true religion ? This is the most natural question with man and each one is confronted with it at one stage or another. We have with us hundreds and thousands of scriptures and treatises dealing with the vital problems of life ; but they are not at one in their reply to this baffling question. We have, therefore, to carry on our investigation and our search for a 'correct solution', which cannot but be one. But before we launch upon this quest, we must first know the purpose of religion or *Dharma*. The objective which all the religions place before us is however one and the same—to wit, Divine Beatitude and Beatific Vision of the Lord. All the religions then, aim at the same target, like so many archers. If we are really sincere in our profession of love for God, we must have love for God's creation, because the Creator and His creation are but identical. We cannot love the one and hate the other. All the saints and sages work on this principle and love humanity as such, no matter whether one believes in God or does not, for they draw no distinction between theists and atheists or agnostics. They believe in the one great family of God and all

are dear to them, inspite of seeming differences in non-essentials of life.

But what do we actually see in the world? Having forgotten the basic truth of love working at the root of all religions, we one and all, are cut off from the sheet-anchor and are afloat rudderless on the sea of life. Each one of us tries to catch at a straw to save oneself. The natural result is that after a brief struggle with chance winds and waters, we sink into the great oblivion, without solving the riddle of life—whence we come and where-to we are bound or the why and wherefore of human life.

Love, then, is the only true religion. Saint Paul, addressing the Galatians, said: "By love, serve one another." (Galatians V:13) Leigh Hunt declared: "One who serves his fellow men, loves God and is the true beloved of God." Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his famous poem '*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*' tells us:

"He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

St. John in his Epistle (I John IV:8) wrote: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love." Christ, the great apostle of peace, emphatically laid down a cardinal principle of life in his memorable words: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." And again he emphatically

declared "Love and all things shall be added unto thee."

Sheikh Saadi, a Muslim divine, taught the same thing: 'As the limbs of a body are knit together so are the children of God. They are born of the same essence. Should anyone of them suffer from ague, the others too become restless."

Sheikh Farid and other saints also repeat this truth in the same strain: "If thou wishest to meet thy Beloved (God), injure not anyone's feelings." —Shalok Farid

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of the Sikhs, says: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee that God manifests Himself to one who loves." God is Love, our soul is of the same essence as of God, so it is Love, and the Way back to God is also through Love.

Again, it is said:

"The Creator and His creation are one. Do no injury to His creation, O Nandlal, and incur not the wrath of God." —Bhai Nand Lal

All the holy and pious devotees have but one religion, the religion of devotion to God and love for His creation. A man is no better than a sheep or goat that nourish a blind life in the brain if he is not actuated by feelings of love and affection for his fellow men and does not share in their joys and sorrows, and lends not a helping hand in their toils and troubles. If instead

of human sympathy, we are filled with ill-will, hatred, jealousy, envy and animosity, and are charged with greed, avarice and self love and are swayed by pride and prejudices, we cannot have a pure heart capable of reflecting the light of God in us, nor can we have true happiness and bliss.

Man is the roof and crown of the creation, endowed as he is with the spirit of God. The more one loves his fellow beings, the nearer one gets to the Creator. All the creation is His manifestation and His spirit is immanent in all forms and patterns. All colours take their hue from Him. All-Pervading, His spirit works everywhere and there is no place without Him.

"All reflect the Self-Source Light,
Oh, none is good or bad." —Parbhati Kabir

Again :

"The part is in the whole, and the whole in the part,
Where then the difference, when both reflect the One."

The difference in forms, in modes of life, in clothing and in outer observances are all due to physiological conditions and cannot affect the inner working of the soul and do fade into vapoury nothings when one rises above the body-consciousness and transcends into the Divine Ground at the seat of the soul.

Christ always taught:

"Love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind,"

and,

"Love thy neighbour as thyself,"

and further still,

"Love thine enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven. Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." —Matt. 5:44-48

This, in fact, is the true religion, true devotion and true meditation.

Human heart is the seat of God. It has been given to man in trust. It must therefore be kept neat and clean, for then alone it can reflect His light and make life truly blessed. Body is the temple of God. We keep man-made temples meticulously neat and clean but pay scant attention to the holy temple of God which really we are. How to do it is the question?

There is just one Creative Principle for the entire creation. All are born of the light of God and the same light shines forth in all; and as such none of His creatures can be dubbed as evil. A. Kempeis, in 'Imitation of Christ,' writes: "From One Word Proceed all things and all things tell of Him." The Hindus call

this Creative Principle '*Naad*', the Muslims call it '*Kalma*', and the Sikhs '*Naam*'. "Truth is one and only one, though sages describe it variously," is the memorable Upanishadic text.

Sheikh Saadi tells us: "No religion is higher than the service of the people. The rosary, the the altar and the apparel give not any merit. My Beloved is in all hearts and no heart is without Him. Blessed indeed is the heart that manifests Him. Know for certain that God resides in all hearts and hence every heart need be respected."

"No better than quarrystone is the *Kaaba* of Khalil,
Kaaba of the human heart provides God a seat.
Of all pilgrimages, one to the human heart is true,
It gives more of merit than the countless Mecca trips will do."

This is what the great saint, Maulana Rumi, says: "O man, circumambulate the secret *Kaaba* of the heart, unlike the *Kaaba* of Khalil—for God made the *Kaaba* of the human heart."

This is, what, a great saint named, Maghribi Sahib, gave out "The performance of countless austerities and penances, each followed by acts of charity; the observance of innumerable fasts, each attended with thousands of prayers and keeping of sleepless vigils for myriads of nights, will not be of any avail to thee if thou injurest the feelings of a single individual."

Again, Hafiz says: "Drink wine to your heart's content, burn down the holy Quran and consign to the flames even the sacred *Kaaba* if you will, but injure not the feelings of any man." The things referred to are considered as sins, but Hafiz says that it is much better to commit them than to injure the feelings of any man which is the most heinous sin of them all.

Sheikh Saadi, a Muslim divine, says:

"The Grace of God never descends until ye love His creation,
God forgives only those who work for the good of His creation."

All Men have equal Privileges from God:

All persons irrespective of sex, colour, caste or creed; all men rich or poor, high or low, come into the world alike. Born as they are from the mother's womb by the union of sperms and ova, each one sees the light of the day after a period of gestation.

Kabir Sahib, a great Indian saint, while addressing a high caste priest, told him: "O Brahman, should you claim high birth and on that account special privileges, you ought to have been born in a way different from that of the rest."

Again, there is a marked likeness in the physical lineaments of all men whether in the East or in the West. Each one is gifted with equal number of organs and senses. All are

moved and actuated by similar impulses and instincts. The weather conditions affect them all alike. All enjoy freely the gifts of Dame Nature and participate in her boundless bounties—light, air, water and food, etc.

In every way, similarity runs through the entire creation. All persons irrespective of their nationalities and colour bars, are gifted with bodies composed of five elements : earth, water, fire, air, and ether, and live alike on this earth under the canopy of the blue sky. Disease, decay and death come to all in just the same way. No one escapes the ravages of time. So also do the remedies work in each case. God has made no distinction between man and man. Man alone is responsible for all kinds of distinctions and differences of caste, colour and creed, splitting humanity into narrow grooves of classes, groups, sects and nationalities.

Religious Differences :

The religious differences, as they appear to be, are all man-made and are the result of narrowness and bigotry.

Saints and seers have one common message for the entire world. Their message is one of Universal Love. No one indeed can prove his love of God unless he knows how to love his fellow beings. Just as physical maladies wreck the human body, so do mental perversities. The latter so poison the circulatory system in the

body that one is badly affected by greed, selfishness, hatred, ill-will and animosity, which in turn lead to perverted outlook on life. Thus man is dragged down to the level of beasts, nay, at times man descends even lower than the beasts. Very often, the result is social and economic disintegration.

Whenever Master-souls come into the world, they tell us that all religious differences are the outcome either of ignorance, individual whim, religious vanity or of spiritual egotism. The so-called leaders in every religion suffer from misguided fervour and narrow prejudices so that they cannot possibly take a detached view of things around them. On the contrary they see the world through the smoke-coloured glasses they have provided for themselves. They have no toleration for things and conditions that are not in accord with the rigid formularies of their organised sectarian or religious orders.

There is only one world-embracing universal religion, the religion of Love, based on the great fundamental truth—the Fatherfood of God and the brotherhood of man. We have, through self-interest, petty prejudices and befogged understanding, carved out narrow sectarian principalities. We have raised around us hedges and walls of hatred and antagonism, thus dividing man from man, class from class, nation from

nation and country from country. In this connection, Hafiz, a great Mohammedan saint, says :
"One Reality shines both in *Islam* and *Kufar* (the man of faith and a heretic) and all the seeming differences in the various orders are in fact vapoury nothings.
It is through sheer prejudices that the *Brahmans* and the *Sheikhs* (religious heads of Hinduism and Islam, respectively) have now different drinking bowls, though in a wine-bar, there is only one butler (the God-man), dispensing the same wine (of Divine Love) from the same flagon to the various tipplers at the table."

Saints tell us that there is only one God of the entire universe. Upanishads say the same thing : "Truth is one though sages call it variously." He is the God of the whole creation and not of one religion or the other. There is in fact no difference between *Karta* (the One True Creator) of the Hindus and *Karim* (Merciful) of the Muslims, *Ram* (Sustainer of the Hindus) and *Rahim* (Compassionate of the Muslims). All these names are descriptive of the various attributes of God and were coined by sages, saints, rishis and munis of different denominations in their own respective languages. The Nameless Reality is One but responds to the calls of all by any name by which any individual may invoke that Power.

"The Nameless One has many names. He doth attend, by whatsoever name He is addressed.
—Maulvi Rumi

One must carefully avoid the dangers of doubt and scepticism. God alone need be worshipped and adored. He is the God of all, and each one is His manifestation. The same life-impulse works in all and each is lighted by the same light. The entire humanity constitutes a single class by itself. Guru Gobind Singh says in this context :

"Some keep shaven crowns, while others robe themselves in flame-coloured apparel, and still others call themselves *Jogis* (a sect that wears wooden ear-rings in their ears and are ever on the march from stage to stage). Again, some are observing celibacy in quest of the Lord, while others perform penances and strict austerities. Some are Hindus and some are Turks, while others are *Imams, Rafzi* or followers of any other saint. With all these differences in nomenclature, they at the root are all One—mankind—to wit, men born of and embedded in God ; call Him the Creator, the Merciful, the Donor or Rahim for that makes no difference at all—take it as a settled Truth and be not therefore bewildered by diversity in names. They all serve and worship the same God, the same Lord and Master of the Universe. All of them

manifest the image of the same God and, exist simply by His Love and Light alone. Many a name, has the Nameless One, addressed in any, He doth attend."

Remembrance of God :

Remembrance of God is the main thing before us to find the Way back to God. The purpose of all devotional exercises, places of worship and pilgrimages is the same. Human body is the veritable temple of God.

There is one and only one common objective of the various forms of devotion as prescribed in different scriptures : how to love the Lord and how to realise Him. The various writers in different times and in different climes, have in their own way pointed out this Path leading to God. It may be likened to a game of archery in which so many archers participate and discharge their arrows at the common target. An Indian saint says : "Each one in his own way talks to us of his own Beloved. O Rajab ! the target is one but the archers are countless."

In the holy Quran (Surat Nahal—5th Raku), it is mentioned that from time to time different forms of worship were introduced by God-sent Master-souls according to the needs of the age in which they lived. Omar Khayyam, a great Persian Sufie poet, says : "The temples and the mosques or the churches and synagogues are alike for the worship of God. The Gong and

Conch perpetually produce therein rapturous strains of the Music of Life. The Arch in the mosques, the Cross in the churches and the Altar in the temples and Rosary in the synagogues are just different symbols for the worship of the Divine Beloved."

God cannot be realised even in the holy places of worship, no matter what their denomination might be. To realise Him, one has to enter into the laboratory of the human body which in the truest sense of the word is the temple of God. Real worship and devotion is purely an internal and a mental process unconnected with and independent of any and everything outside the human frame. All that is required is purity of mind. With an ethical background, one can worship God anywhere under the blue sky, for the whole world is a vast temple of God, and there is no place without Him including the specific places of worship described above. In fact, wheresoever devotion kneels in humility, that place becomes sanctified.

In the holy Quran (Albakar) it is mentioned: "All the universe is His. Turn wheresoever one may, East or West, one would face God for He is both Omnipresent and Omniscient." Again : "For the ignorant, God lives only in man-made temples, mosques or churches, but the really awakened fiind Him only within themselves—the God-made temple of the human body."

Al-Nisaee Sahib says : "For me the whole world is a holy mosque, wherever the fixed time of prayers comes up, my followers may perform their prayers then and there."

"All is holy where devotion kneels."

—H. O. Wendell

Maghrabi Sahib tells us : "Thy Beloved is within thee and thou art ignorant of it and goest to find Him without, from place to place. To go to a mosque in search of one who is the very soul of thy soul, is nothing short of tragic waste of time. The ignorant bow down before a mosque, while the wise are engaged in purifying the mind which is the throne of God Himself." The former is just sham tinsel and the latter is the actual reality.

The true *Kaaba* or the altar of worship is, therefore, the Satguru—a personality in whom the light of God shines. Tulsi Sahib says : "Woe be to thee, O indweller of the God-made mosque for thou goest for worship to the man-made temple." Kabir Sahib also speaks thus : "As Kabir preceeded on a pilgrimage to Mecca, God met him on the way and He reprimanded him and sternly enquired as to who told him that He was there and not here." Guru Amar Dass says : "This body is the veritable temple of God. In it alone shines the Light of God." (Parbhati M.3). Christ also said : "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the

spirit of God dwelleth in you." (I Corinthians 3 : 16), and again "Ye are the temple of the living God."—II Corinthians 6 : 16.

Hafiz of Shiraz speaks in the same terms: "The object of my going to the temple or the mosque is to unite with thee, O Lord ! Except this, there is no other idea in it." Again he says: "Say not that *Kaaba* is better than a temple. In fact that place alone is the best where one may witness the Glory of his Beloved."

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, clearly puts it down thus : "There is no difference between a dera and a mosque, *Puja* (Hindu way of worship) and *Namaz* (Mohammedan form of prayer) as both serve the same purpose. All mankind are one and the same and the idea of diversity is but a myth. The same God has created the Angels and the Spirits, as also the Turks and the Hindus, in fact men of all denominations. The outer variety in mankind is the result of physiological conditions prevailing in the various parts of the world. Yet all of them are on the same pattern with similar eyes, ears, bodies, and their physical apparel is made out of the five elements : earth, water, fire, air and ether. *Allah* of the Moslems and *Alekh* of the Hindus are the names of the same Entity. The Puranas and the Quran speak of Him alone."

In fact all religions extant on earth point to the same Reality. In all scriptures it is said that a search for Him in the outside world is of no avail and it is only through the Grace of a Master or the Guru that the Lord is made manifest within. All places of worship wherever these be are made of water and clay. When God is Omnipresent, why need one seek Him in temples and mosques alone? He is right within us, nay is the very soul of our soul and we live and have our being in Him. But this Truth dawns only when a *Sant-Satguru* (Master-soul) helps in bringing it home to us through actual experience.

"Where shall I go, when I see His glory within?
The mind saturated in Him has no distractions.
One day greatly obsessed, I prepared a sandal paste,
And started for the abode of *Brahma* when the Master told me that He dwelt in the folds of the mind."

"Wherever I go, I see houses of water and clay,
And yet I see Thee in fullness in everything,
I have searched Thee in the Vedas and the Puranas, and all scriptures repeat the same,
Why should I wander elsewhere when Thou art right here?"

"O Satguru! I would like to make a holocaust of myself at Thy feet,
For Thou hath saved me from all delusions and snapped all bonds,

Ramanand now lives and rests in *Brahma*,
The Word of the Master burns to ashes myriads of Karmas." —Basant Ramanand

Guru Arjan says; "Some address Him as *Ram* and some as *Khuda*. Some call Him *Gosain* and others Allah. He is the *Kaaran* and *Karim* or the *Kirpa Dhar Rahim*. He is the Creator giving out merciful glances all the world over. Some go for a bath to the sacred rivers, while others go for a *Haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). Some worship Him and some bow their heads in silent adoration. Some engage in the study of the Vedas and some read sacred books of other religions. Some put on white raiments and some the blue apparel. Some are called Hindu and others Turk. But O Nanak! one who has known His Will (by becoming conscious co-worker with Him) he alone may know the mystery of God." —Ramkali M.5

The sacred lore of the Hindus is in Sanskrit or in Hindi, and that of the Mohammedans in Arabic or in Persian, Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikhs is in Punjabi, while the Bible of the Christians is in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English. The various expositions, the commentaries, and annotations of these are in the different languages that were in common vogue at one time or another. All these scriptures whatever their language (for languages count not with God), simply serve the purpose of creating in us a

desire, a yearning, a craving, a longing and love for God. These are the means and not the end, for God is an Unwritten Law and His is an Unspoken language. He defies all tongues for none can reach Him. No particular tongue has any special merit, for it is just a vehicle of expression and nothing else, so that one may narrate and listen to the loving stories of God. Hafiz therefore beautifully says :

"O Hafiz ! in the matter of love, there is no difference between the Turkish and the Arabic or other languages. The tales of love may be narrated in either of the languages as may be known to thee."

The various peoples of the different lands are just like so many sons of the same Father and flowers of the same garden, though gifted with different colours and fragrance. Living in the lap of the same Dame Nature and under the same blue canopy, we have narrowed ourselves through petty prejudices and short-sighted vision, into various religious sects and orders. Religion, as the word literally implies is a 'Way-back' or re-linking with the Source. Instead of vouchsafing liberation, religion has, like the proverbial Blanket-bear, taken hold of us in its iron grip from which it is not possible to escape.

To understand the proverbial saying 'Blanket-bear' : A bear was swimming down a river

when a man standing on the bank mistook it for a blanket, and jumped into the water to fetch it out. But when he caught hold of it, he discovered his mistake and now when he wanted to swim back, he could not do so, for the bear had caught hold of him instead in his strong grip and would not let him go. Those standing on the side of the stream asked him to come back. He said he would like to come back, but the blanket-bear would not let him go. Such is the condition in which the people of the work-a-day world are drifting these days. The awakened ones revolt at this sad state of affairs. When both the mosque and the temple constitute the house of God and are lighted by the Light of God, why and for what should there be so much pother about them?

The object of worship in a temple or in a mosque or any other religious place is to find out the same Beloved. When inspite of apparent differences in form, shape and colour the two stones, if struck together produce the same sparks, it is strange that the two different types of wishippers fail to produce the same result. It is simply because neither of them has understood real worship.

All religions have as their ideal, self-knowledge and God-realisation, but in the very name of the respective religions, the *Brahmans* and the *Sheikhs* (the religious heads of the

Hindus and the Mohammendans, and of other sects) preach hatred and ill-will against each other.

The institution of paid-preachers has in these days converted religious centres into commercialised markets with stock-in-trade of falsehood, hypocrisy and deceit. Truth, faith and devotion, so to say, have been banished from them. The true lovers of God therefore disassociate themselves from such horrible state of things, and keep aloof from both.

Bulleh Shah pathetically describes this sad state of affairs of his time as: "*Dharamshalas* (places of worship) serve as entrepots for the swindlers, and *Thakur-Dwaras* (houses of God) as houses for the thugs and cheats. Mosques shelter merciless butchers, while the true lovers of God stand apart from all these."

The seeds of enmity and hatred between man and man are sown by the very people who themselves are victims of stark ignorance. Pandora-like, they know not what mischief they unleash into the world by their thoughtless utterances. Such persons are styled in the scriptures as *Manmukh* or the mouthpiece of the mind for they do things thoughtlessly and their actions are all steeped in and saturated with selfish greed. Their tongues wag, cutting deep chasms right and left into the very vitals of the peoples and injecting poison into the

well-heads of their mind. Whosoever comes into contact with them and drinks of their words, not only catches the infection of discord and inharmony, but like hounds becomes blood-thirsty of his own kith and kin. Mohammedans call such persons *Kafirs* (heretics).

The sole object of such *Man-mukhs* (slaves of the mind) or *Kafirs* (the heretics) is to ingratiate themselves, by hook or crook, into name and fame, to trample down the legitimite rights of others with a view to amass for themselves ill-gotten gains and possess pelf and power which do not really belong to them.

As opposed to *Man-mukhs* or *Kafirs*, there are the *Gurmukhs* (or the mouthpiece of Guru). They are the prototype of philanthropy and the reservoirs of love, shedding the beneficent light of love around their fellow beings. They recognise the essential unity of all humanity embedded as it is in the root cause of God. Islam calls such people '*Momins*'. "They have regard and respect not only for the Prophet of Islam but for the prophets of all other religions whose names have been mentioned in Quran as also for those whose names have not been mentioned therein." They see the essential unifying link that runs through all, and do not look to the seeming differences in non-essentials.

The fundamental Truths :

These are common in all religions and point the same way.

Religious truths whether social, ethical or spiritual have a common ideal and a common objective. Man should lead an ethical life, serve mankind, be of help to all others in this earthly sojourn and should know himself and then develop God-knowledge and God-consciousness leading ultimately to God-head. The word "religion" as the term indicates, is a great binding force that links man back to his Creator, Whom he by his entire absorption in the mundane affairs of life, has entirely forgotten having become identified with the world. Love of man and love of God as also faith in God and living contact with 'God-in-action' or 'Holy Ghost', '*Ek-aunkar*' or the 'Word' is the universal religion that has been given to the world by the saints from age to age. It is eternal and unchangeable for all times.

All the scriptures, the world over, teach the same thing, namely, that one should engage in good and pious acts, take hold of the saving life chord within and riding on the Sound-current, reach the home of his Father. God is the ideal and one should worship Him with love and devotion and people should serve each other with love. St. Paul always exhorted mankind : "By love serve one another." Vedas tell us to remember and worship God in congregations. (Atharv Veda : 3 : 30-5). There is no virtue higher than to have firm faith in God, to

commune with His holy Word and to render loving service to His creation. This in fact is the true and universal religion, common for mankind, eternal and unchangeable.

Guru Arjan speaking of the highest and the holiest Truth, at the core of all religions refers to contact with the *'Shabd Dhun'* the Sound principle which is the primal manifestation of God and the causeless Cause of the entire creation.

"The highest and the holiest in all religions enjoins communion with the Word of God and good actions." —Gauri M.5

Again,—

"There is no virtue higher than to sing of the Lord (the Divine Melody) and to associate with His elects.

O Nanak ! these boons one gets only through the writ of the Most High and not otherwise."

—Sorath M.5

It was because of this that Guru Arjan, while compiling the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs, the Granth Sahib, collected therein the sayings of the various Master-souls: Hindus, Mohammedans or Sikhs, without caring for their vocation in life, high or low. In it we find the sayings of Sant Kabir (a weaver by profession), Nam Dev (a calico-printer), Ravi Das (a cobbler), Dhanna Jat, Baba Farid (a mohammedan) and others of Khshatriya class. Such godly

souls come into the world, untrammelled and free, with a specific mission, the dispensation of the Saving Grace of the Lord for those who listen to them and follow their teachings. It is a proof positive of the fact that Reality is one though it has been named differently by different sages in different places and at different times. Such Master-souls, whenever and wherever they appear on the scene of life, impart to the erring humanity, lessons in humanitarianism and godliness and instil the people with the love of man and God and above all put them on the Path leading Godwards. They, imbued in the spirit of God, are freethinkers and try to make mankind free from the watertight and narrow limitation of fossilised religions and religious beliefs, so that they may bask in the sunshine of God and sing of His Glory.

Saints look after and take charge of the souls and not of the raiment of the body with its various denominational hallmarks. They try to form and cement the brotherhood of man and tell us of "The Way Out" of the body, by the process of "Soul-withdrawal" and "The Way In" to the spiritual world beyond, by means of a contact with the Holy Ghost or *Naam*. They come to unite individual souls with God and not to disrupt this relationship wheresoever it is already in existence.

Their sole object is to unite all mankind in the silken bonds of love and not to create

schisms and splits. Maulana Rumi tells us that God, speaking to Moses, reprimanded him with the words :

"I sent you into the world to unite people unto Me,
And not to lead astray such as were already united with Me." —Maulana Rumi

No religious barriers stand in the way of God-men. They serve as beacon light in the stormy sea of life. In fact they have love for all religions and actually give life and light to them all without which these gradually, in course of time, grow dull, drab and lifeless like a body without the life-giving spirit.

Guru Nanak for instance went on pilgrimage to far off Mecca, in Arabia, Sangladip or Ceylon in the South and Burma and China in the East, and gave to the people everywhere as much the benefit of his teachings as to Hindus in Benares and Hardwar, the sacred places of Hindus. He carried the same message of Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man to every place. They love all the saints, past and present, irrespective of creed or colour. God-intoxicated people sit together as tipplers in the tavern of God. There existed fraternal relationship between Guru Arjan, Hazrat Mian Mir and Bhagat Chhaj-ju. Guru Har Gobind provided for the Muslims a mosque for worship. Guru Gobind Singh had equal love for the Hindus, the Muslims and men

of all other denominations. When he was hemmed in by the Turks on the plain of Machhiwara, it was the Muslims who helped him out of the trying impasse and saved his life. Bhai Kanahya Singh, one of his followers, supplied drinking water and tended alike to the wounded Muslim and Hindu soldiers on the field of battle. When complained against by the ignorant sikhs for his alleged treacherous conduct, he told the Master that as he flitted about on the field with his water-skin to serve the thirsty and the dying, he witnessed in one and all alike, the same light as was in the Master. The Guru thereupon blessed him for having correctly imbibed his teachings.

> "When once the ignorance is dispelled, all distinctions between the Hindus and the Muslims, and in fact among all the sectarian people, drop off and vanish like airy nothings."
>
> —Guru Gobind Singh

God is the substratum and life-principle for the entire creation—even of the heretics and the agnostics. As He loves all, so do saints who are dyed in His very colour. Once Moses sharing a meal with someone felt a rude shock in the heart of his hearts when he saw that his companion had offered no grace before taking it, but God reprimanded him for he had no business to be dissatisfied with one whom He (God) in his unbounded mercy provided with

food. Such Master-souls have great and unbounded love for one and all, no matter if some of them be the worst of sinners, the most despised and hated by society. No person has a right to address God as Father, unless he is prepared to love his fellow beings as his brethren. All life springs from Him and as such there should be no discrimination between high and low, the faithful and the heretic. One may not know of the Father; that is a different thing, but he is born of the Father and that is all one need know and act upon.

Place of rites and rituals in religions; their different forms and their values:

Rites and rituals as well as forms and formularies play an integral part in each religion. The differences in rites and rituals and in the forms and formularies of various religions are determined by various considerations like climatic conditions prevailing in different countries and the mode of life of the people. Let us, for instance, take the case of Arabia. It is a desert country. Owing to scarcity of water it is considered enough for an Arab to wash only his hands, feet, and face before offering prayers, and where no water is available at all, he may cleanse them with sand instead, the ritual being technically known as *Tayamum*. Similarly, in Bikaner, another desert tract, in India, where there is dearth of water, it is commonly believed that

if anyone uses more than 10 lbs. of water in a day, he will have to account for his extravagance to God.

In the rest of India and other places where water is plentiful, no one sits for meditation without a full bath to one's heart's content. Again, in the West, people would enter churches and attend the services bare-headed but with shoes on. In the East, it is quite the contrary. An oriental would never enter a temple or a Gurdwara and attend the service unless he covers up his head and his feet are bare. The object in each case is of course the same—to maintain an attitude of respect and reverence for the holy precincts. Different modes of worship have been adopted in various parts of the world owing to climatic considerations, such as cold climate in the West and hot climate in the East.

All rites and rituals are correlated with the human body and are more or less, part of social conduct. The ultimate object in each case is to secure cleanliness and awareness on the one hand and respectful attitude on the other, before going into the presence of God. The outer forms that one may adopt to achieve the object are immaterial to God. He loves His creatures regardless of how and in what fashion they come to Him, just as any earthly father would love his children whether in rich attire or in tatters.

Here is the question that naturally arises: When love is the universal religion for the entire humanity, how has mankind come to be split up into so many sectarian and watertight compartments, in spite of the fundamental unities in all religions? This segregation into groups is due to the differences in the articles of faith which in course of time grow rigid and inelastic.

When Guru Nanak went to Mecca and preached worship of the Supreme God, the Muslims declared that there was no difference between his teachings and those of Islam. Guru Nanak then explained to them that his teachings centered round "Absolute Oneness," while theirs was hedged around with limitations and was therefore "Relative Oneness" only. He said that God sent into the world countless prophets and Master-souls to guide the people from time to time, and will continue to do so in future. The law of supply and demand was always at work in Nature, as well as in man, and there could be no limitations to God's power to send mediators and reconcilers into the world. Similarly, from age to age and in different climes and countries, there sprang up sacred lore and scriptures like the Vedas, the Quran and the Bible and there could be no end to these at any time.

God is Infinite and man as a finite being cannot possibly know His purpose and the working

of His Will, nor can he adequately sing of His limitless attributes. The more one may advance towards Him, the greater He grows in His glory and greatness too deep for human ken to penetrate and understand Him. A fish living in the ocean, cannot know the depth and extent of the ocean.

"Thou art an all-knowing ocean and I a trifling
shrimp cannot sound Thy vastness."

—Sri Rag M.I

God is Infinite and all ideas of finitude that may be attributed to Him are, in the very nature of things, contradictions in terms—the two ideas being highly incompatible with each other. He created innumerable *Brahmas*, *Vishnus*, *Shivas*, *Gorakhs* and *Naths*, *Ramas* and *Krishnas*, *Buddhas*, *Christs* and *Mohammeds*. All of them were the torch-bearers of His light and many more shall come according to the needs and requirements of the time. Man being finite cannot possibly know the Infinite and His inscrutable ways whereby He fulfills His purpose. The more a person advances in mundane knowledge and learning, the more he recedes from Him, and the bounds of High Glory fade from his view.

God is indeed Limitless but we limited beings try to limit Him in measured and restricted terms for we cannot know Him at all until we become one with Him.

"Thou art limitless, how can we the limited beings know of Thee, O Lord." —Sorath M.5

Ideal man :

Man is essentially a social being. He is born in society and cannot live without society. As such, the Master-souls do not interfere in his social conduct and religious mode of life. They tell us to lead a life of purity and chastity within the frame-work of the social order in which we are born or to which we belong but should not dehumanise our human nature that has been given to us as a sacred trust from God. The outer differences of apparel and mode of life: social or religious, should not affect and interfere with the inner life in man which is the same in the folds of the human breast. They emphatically deal with man as man (an individual as opposed to social being) and try to inculcate in him the importance of cultivating qualities that go to make him an ideal man, full of love for God as father and His creatures as his brethren. They say that man should engage in honest pursuits, making an honest living both for himself and his family, and love all sentient beings, and treat them with loving sympathy.

Man is the roof and crown of the entire creation. He is an embodied soul. From bodily point of view, he must live and act as an ideal man would and from the point of view of the spirit which is in essence the same as God.

Kabir says: "Soul is the same essence as that of God." He must manifest God-head or God's light. Christ therefore declares:

"The light (of Spirit) shineth in darkness (body) and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

—St. John 1-15

"Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." —Luke 11-35

"Be ye perfect as thy Father in heaven is perfect."

—Matt. 5-48

Man and God are fully embedded in each other. It therefore behoves man to reflect the light of God around him. God is the soul of his soul and his body is the veritable temple of God. Without the light of his life, human body is just like a husk without a kernel, useless and inconsequential trash, fit to be cremated or consigned to the grave.

"Man is an embodied Truth for Truth is his very life.
Without the light of Truth, how can man live?"

Again,—

"God speaks through a human pole,
Without such a pole, how can He speak?"

Hazrat Attaar, a great Muslim Divine, says: "O man! thou art the very center of creation. In fact the very macrocosm is in the microcosm of thy body. Thou art the living book of God, for in and through thee alone, God apeaks and reveals Himself."

If man were to take care of his latent Godhead and make it patent, a practical work-a-day principle, this mundane world full of evils would become a veritable Garden of Eden, or Muqam-i-Haq or Sachkhand. Then His Kingdom would come on earth as it is in Heaven, for which the Christians and others so fervently pray from day to day.

It therefore behoves us to convert this world into a veritable land of the pious, peopled by persons with purely human instincts in them, unalloyed by feelings of hatred and animosity, pride and prejudices, and impervious to satanic influences and animal passions which degrade man to the level of a beast. It would then be a land of free and loving persons, each respecting the rights of others, with no room for courts to adjudicate disputes nor police to keep the peace, nor armies to keep down aggressions. The inhabitants of the world would then be the living embodiments of the life and love of God, walking freely and fearlessly in the heavens' light dressed in pure godliness, in the land of the pious and the pure (Pakistan) and the really righteous (Khalistan). The ideal of the saints is not to depopulate the world but to humanise it.

The only ideal for man is to be perfect and complete. This would distinguish him from amputated, moth-eaten and mutilated man, completely ignorant of the Godhead in him,

torn as he is by petty jealousies, avarice, greed, deceit, enmity, recriminations and all types of vices, a true abode for Satan as at present. Saint Paul says: "Ye are complete in Godhood." Every religion enjoins the worship of perfected beings who are at one with God. In the Bhagavad Gita, it is mentioned that the roots of the creation are rooted down in heaven, but its branches spread as far as the earth. So is the case with man. His roots too are implanted in Godhood, though he moves about and works on earth. Behind this apparent consciousness that works in the world, lies the entire mystery of the Motor Power—the great dynamo without which this outer consciousness cannot operate. We are aware of this outer ocean of consciousness only so far as it operates on the plane of senses but the major part of it lies hidden at the root or center of the soul in the eye-focus within and of which we are totally ignorant. It is no wonder then that the Masters laid great stress on self-knowledge and preached that one should know of his conscious self, before anything else.

From time to time, Master-souls come into the world and place before it, the fundamental truth of the ideal man, that one must acquire all-round perfection. *"Know Thyself!"* has always been their slogan and a clarion call to the society steeped in stark ignorance and dead to the

highers piritual powers lying dormant in man. "*Gnothi Seaton,*" was as much an article of faith with the ancient Greeks as "*Nosce Tiepsum*" was with the ancient Latins. Their cry has been: "Awake, arise and stop not, until the goal is reached." All the ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak down to Guru Gobind Singh, placed before the Indian society, the ideal of a *Sikh* (a true disciple), and of a *Khalsa* (the pure one), of selfless service to humanity born of genuine love for the entire mankind, for these constitute the bedrock of spiritual life and quicken the latent spiritual aspiration in man by gradually freeing him from narrow bigotries and sense of false pride.

The Muslims gave to the world the ideal man in the form of a *Momin* and the Christians in the form of a *Puritan*. In fact all Master-souls have emphasized the need of developing an ideality in man so as to raise him to the level of a superman, far above the plane of senses. Iqbal, a great Urdu poet of the Punjab, says: "Moses went to Mount Tur to witness the glory of God, because he was not aware of the great mystery within. O thou, the seeker after truth, seek out an ideal man—for God, too, seeks one who can truly manifest Him in the world."

All the scriptures and all the world teachers have laid emphasis on the greatness of man for he has vast potentialities in him, which he can, if he will, develop to any extent he may like,

leading to Godhead. The pelf and power of the world is nothing in comparison to the spiritual treasures lying within him, while he, in ignorance, is like a mendicant roaming about in search of pebbles, and in the end barters away his precious life for such trash.

Ruskin, too, likewise, says: "There is no wealth but life, life including all its powers of love, joy and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings. That man is the richest who having perfected the functions of his own life in the utmost, has also widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others."

Spirituality: Its need

Wheresoever one may turn, one finds extreme tension, anxiety, and suspense prevailing everywhere. The root cause of this universal chaos is restlessness in individual minds. Man has made tremendous progress in various spheres of life, but unfortunately has not cared to know anything about the spirit within and is altogether ignorant in this behalf. He has unravelled the mysteries of the Starry Welkin, sounded the depths of the seas, delved deep into the bowels of the earth, braved the blinding blizzards and avalanches in scaling the dizzy hights of the snowy Mount Everest, and is now out exploring space so as to establish interplanetory relations, but sad to say, has not

found out the mystery of the human soul within him. He has always ignored the question of questions and has studiously avoided the vital issues of life, regarding self-knowledge or the knowledge of the soul, as of no consequence.

A person may possess all the riches of the world, but if he does not know anything about his own soul, it is all in vain. The ultimate purpose of all knowledge is that one should know one's self. A Muslim divine, in this context, says:

"The be-all and end-all of knowledge is but one,
That one may know the real worth of one's soul,
Thou knowest the value of everything else,
But what a folly that thou knowest not thine own value."

What a pity it is that we have made wonderful progress in all the walks of life but woefully lack self-knowledge in the light and life of which we actually live and have our very being. By ignorance of the vital reality in us, it is no wonder that we have made a fool of ourselves. Christ also says the same thing: "What does it profit a man to gain possessions of the whole world and to lose his own soul."

A part remains just a part until it merges into the whole, and loses its own individuality in its fountainhead or the source. A mountain

stream in its downward course gurgles hard, frets and fumes, until it falls into the ocean. So is the case with an individual spirit. Not knowing its essential nature, it knows not even its own source and so it frets and fumes, as the stream of life splashes, along its stony bed, strewn with big boulders and submerged rocks. Individual restlessness is reflected in the restlessness that we see among the peoples of the world. Man has forgotten the great fundamental truth—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Hence, there is clash between man and man, class and class, society and society, and country and country.

The crying need of the hour is to give a new orientation to the ancient science of spirituality and to tell the people to live a spiritual life. The entire humanity is steeped in ignorance. Most of the people in the world live a life of selfishness and are bent upon enriching themselves at the cost of others, but they too stand bewildered as if between two millstones : (i) Truth scientifically explained and taught by the Masters and (ii) the rigid formularies or the fossilized remains of religion taught mostly by ignorant religious fanatics. The so-called teachers and preachers who should guide aright the erring mankind are themselves victims of the Grand Delusion and know not where they stand and what they have to do.

Most of us are attracted and irresistibly drawn by the glamour of the outer life, the life of senses, and honestly believe in the Epicurean doctrine of "eat, drink and be merry." We have no need of God at all, the very substratum of the Universe. We have our faith pinned to the walnut casing and do not see the kernel within. We want to swallow the casing and not the sweet and delicious kernel it protects within its hard folds. Our so-called search for God, too, is on the plane of senses, in the world without. We look for Him, on snow-capped mountain tops, in waters of the sacred rivers, in burning desert sands, in temples, mosques, churches, and hence we find Him not. The more we search for Him without, the more He eludes us and is now practically lost to us and we have lost all faith in Him.

"O seekers after God! you have lost God,
You have lost Him in the very whirlpool of
senses."

In such a sad predicament, Master-souls come into the world, from time to time, to lead the erring humanity. Their message is one of hope and not of despair. They come not to break the law but to fulfil the law—the law of Redemption through Grace. They have unbounded love for all the religions and utter not a word against any. On the other hand, they try to reorientate all alike, transfuse fresh blood into their

anemic vitals, resuscitate the decaying nerves and tissues, infuse a glow of life-impulse and to restore them to the high pedestals from whence they have fallen. They simply give the correct lead and point to the right path that lies within and not without, the path that is the most ancient (Sanatan) and is coeval with creation itself, and the most natural (Sahaj). It is the Path laid down by the Creator Himself and is not man-made. They tell us that God exists and that all religions, as made by man, have one object only : an approach to God.

The word *religion* is derived from a Latin root *ligare* with its derivative, *ligament* which means *to bind.* The prefix *re* denotes *again.* So the word *religion* connotes, *to bind again,* what has been sundered, separated and detached i.e. the soul with Oversoul or God or whatever name we may give to the Source—the Fountain-head of all life. True religion in this sense, is a common heritage of mankind and he alone is truly religious, a true *Bhagat* or devotee, a true Sikh or disciple, a true Mohammedan or a true Christian, who has linked his soul with the Power of God within him. They tell us that human body is the true temple of God, for God made man after his own image. Both the spirit (the soul) and God (the Oversoul) reside in this body, but unfortunately the two are separated from each other by an iron curtain

of egotism or the self-assertive will in man.

"Together do the two dwell in close association,
in the same abode.
But strange as it may seem, the two have
never conversed with each other."

—Gauri M.5

In other words, it may be said that the bride (soul) and the bridegroom (God) are lying together on the same bridal bed, but have not, through the ages, seen each other's face.

"On the one and the same bed lies the beloved,
but woe betide, the spouse that snores
deeply while the consort watches over her
all the time." —Suhi M.5

All religions, in course of time, unfortunately lose sight of the origional idea and become just a code of social conduct or at the most a compendium of ethical and moral principles. Saints therefore do not interfere with fossilized remains of the religions, for man of necessity must conform to and live in one or the other social order. They point to the original common ideal of all religions: the Inner Path leading to God and tell us how to reach God.

Religion : what it is and what it has become:

Religion far from being a manual of spiritual truths, is now-a-days conceived to be: the study of scriptures, epics and biographies of ancient sages; the inferential and needed knowledge about the existence of God, dissertations

and expositions of the various schools of thought as propounded by philosophers in different times and in different climes. Some people are engaged in reconciling the new thought with the old, while others lay stress on the rules of social conduct and ethical principles as the be-all and the end-all of religion. The so-called and self-styled leaders of religious thought are engaged in drumming about the importance of one or the other tenets to which they tenaciously cling. Still others consider that salvation can be had by blind faith on the ancient Master-souls who have already played out their respective roles and left this sub-lunary planet hundreds or even thousands of years ago. Each one of these is so zealous in his own way that he has lost sight of the real truth, and the result is religious bigotry, persecution, inquisitorial courts, pillory, burning at the stake, and the worst is that all this is done in the blessed name of religion.

Religion in fact is the Way back to God or linking the soul with Oversoul. It is the Way, the Path, that should lead the soul to God. But alas! through narrow prejudices, befogged understanding and Petty-mindedness, it is now considered enough, that one should conform to the observance of certain rites and rituals, performance of deeds of merit, wearing of particular type of apparel, keeping certain distinctive

marks on the body and following various rules of social conduct from birth till death, or take to reciting specific mantras and chanting verses on particular occasions.

While the whole world is busy with outer pursuits of one kind or another, the Kingdom of God lies neglected within—a lost province—and no one turns towards it. The Master-Souls point to this Kingdom, and the scriptures also speak of it in unambiguous terms. But owing to dearth of practical persons who have realised the Truth by transcending the bodily and mental limitations, the Reality has slipped through our grasp. Religion in the true sense, has lost its significance and has become encrusted with a mass of ceremonial and ritualistic verbiage.

There is hardly a person who can tell us of the Way within the body, the method of approach to it, the preparatory prerequisites for the aspirants, and above all, be an unerring and a sure Guide on the Way from plane to plane, until the goal is reached. On the contrary many teachers who every day cross us by the multitude, cannot help us to get out of the Grand Delusion. They simply ask us to pin our faith on the teachings of one or other of the ancient sages, but cannot instruct us about the way whereby those sages realised the Truth and we too can likewise do the same, or else they would declare that one or the other of the

scriptures is a direct revelation from God and prescribe its study as a course of discipline for the soul, little knowing that a mere record of the spiritual experiences of their authors cannot give us the benefit of the same unless we are able to make those experiences our own. The scriptures may tell us of the Way out and may even describe the spiritual journey, but cannot actually put us on the Path, resolve our doubts and take us from plane to plane which lie far beyond the scope of words, nor can they save us from the pitfalls and dangers that lurk on the Way. Learned as they are, they can quote scriptures in support of what they allege, but are utterly lost when it comes to practical training and guidance required for self-realisation and God-realisation, of which they are as ignorant as their audience and their followers.

The truth is that unless a person, in full consciousness, can link his soul with Oversoul or God, all his deeds and acts (individual or social), howsoever meritorious in themselves, cannot be of much avail to him. God is the ocean of extreme and restful silence. So long as we cannot have this restful silence within us, the soul cannot listen to the Voice of Silence arising out of the greatest depths of silence. By following that Voice we can reach the source and fountainhead of the Great Silence called God and be blessed forever. This Grand Silence is

the Reality, the Unchangeable Permanence, the Truth or God, call it whatever we may. It can be realised and experienced by the individual soul but cannot be comprehended by the mind or the intellect, limited as these are by time, space and causation, etc. working in the outer world, characterized by these alone. One may have a dip in the Limitless Ocean within, but cannot even by flights of fancy have any idea of it.

"One cannot comprehend Him through reason,
even if one reasoned for ages,
One cannot achieve inner peace by outward
silence, not though one sat dumb for ages."

—Jap Ji : St. I

While confined in the sensual plane, we cannot experience God. Only when we transcend the senses, the mind and the intellect, far beyond the physical, the mental, and the causal planes, can we have the realisation of the Grand Beatitude.

"Exalted is the Lord, and exalted His abode,
More exalted is His holy Word.
He who reaches His Height,
He alone may Glimpse Him." —Jap Ji : St. 24

It is only with the wings of love and devotion that we can reach God and not by intellectual wrestlings and flights of imagination. By constant practice we have to acquire, in the first instance, a state of pure consciouness, untrammelled by

vascillations of the mind and thought-currents, that are constantly and imperceptibly breaking in upon the soul and delimiting it within their grasp. Spiritual life means a union of the soul with Oversoul and not the subject of thought although that is just a stepping-stone or a means to the end.

Spirituality visa-vis Religion:

Spirituality is another name for *Surat Shabd Yoga.* In other words, it means union of the *Surat* (consciousness or soul) with the *Shabd* (Sound-principle Sound-current or God-in-action). It is an inner experience of the soul and far transcends what various creeds and faiths have to tell us, or promise to give. This science is known as *Sant Mat* or Path of the Masters. It tells us of the fundamentals of spirituality. It far excels religions as known in this age, for these teach us merely theories and beliefs, and dabble in jugglery and supernatural powers, etcetra. A true science is no science if it does not reason out conclusions. A blind faith or a blind belief has no place in science which works out results with mathematical precision as any other science would do. Wherever and whenever persons have experimented in this science, they have, one and all, given their experiences and come to the same conclusions.

Spiritual life consists in peeling off layer by layer the various *Koshas* or sheaths : physical, astral

and causal, enshrouding the spirit, until it shines forth in its pristine splendour (self-luminous and shadowless) and comes into its own and says that "I am Soul," "*Aham Brahm Asmi*" or "*Tat Twam Asi*" (I am Brahm or I am as thou art). I am a drop of the ocean of All Consciousness. It is only after this consciousness dawns on the spirit, that it rushes headlong towards its source or fountainhead—the Ocean of Eternal Bliss. This is called *Jiwan Mukti* (salvation in life or life eternal). When dyed in the very colour of God, a person manifests veritable Godhood in thoughts, words and deeds. He becomes a perennial source of life, love and light for the entire humanity.

"Father and the Son are dyed in the same colour and administer the same Law unto the mankind." —Rag Bhairon M.5

"Poor Nanak is the mouthpiece of His Beloved."
—Rag Gauri Sukhmani M.5

"O Lalo ! I open my mouth simply to express or give vent to the thoughts that arise thoughtlessly within me." —Rag Tilang M.I

"Whenever a Master-soul opens His mouth, He does so to utter the Words of Allah or God, though the voice may seem to be human."
—Mauluna Rumi

"I and my Father are one...All things are delivered to me of my Father...I am in the Father and the Father in me. The words I

speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doth the work." —Christ

When a drop of water loses its identity in the ocean, it becomes an integral part of the ocean itself. In the same way a spirit when it once enters into Godhood or merges in God, it no longer remains an individual spirit for the rest of the allotted span of its physical existence but is an integral part of God, the very Ocean of Life. All this can be achieved only through the Grace of a Master-soul; and thus the tedious journey Homeward is accomplished quite easily and smoothly. It is not given to man to achieve this by himself, unaided by Satguru.

"It is the fundamental law of God, that no one can move Godward without the aid of Satguru." —War Bihagra M.4

There is one and only one way Godward, for all alike, rich or poor, high or low, learned or unlettered, oriental or occidental, Laplanders of the North or Bushmen of the South. It is the most ancient and the most natural way, universal in its appeal, since it is ordained by God Himself for His children, no matter wherever in the wide, wide world they may be and whatever religion they may profess and whatever be their colour, caste or creed. This in essence is the scope of spiritual science as taught by Master-souls from time to time, according to the

needs of the age in which they lived and in the then common language of the people. Hence the basic similarity in their teachings :

"Truth is one, though the sages describe it variously," says the Upanishadic text.

Saints work as pilots in the stormy sea of life. They take upon themselves the burden of steering the righteous souls clear of shoal and submerged rocks and do not rest contented until they are safely taken back right to the home of their Father. They come from afar from a purely spiritual realm, with a set purpose and a mission—to ferry the world-weary pilgrim soul anxious for a reunion with the source and fountainhead of life.

"They are godly souls clothed in human bodies
and come with God's knowledge,
They come from unknown places to trade in
souls and ever look backwards."

—Maulana Rumi

The scriptures are full of the spiritual experiences of such high-souled saints and constitute a common heritage for the mankind. Their instructions are for all alike for their's is a universal appeal to humanity and not to this or that social sect or order, for they speak from the level of the soul to all embodied souls irrespective of denominational emblems and nomenclatures, for God belongs to them who claim Him as their own.

"He is peerless and unconcerned, but bound to
His devotees,
All are attached to the world and have no
devotion for the Lord." —Sorath Ravidas

Surat Shabd Yoga aims at a direct union of the soul with God. The Master at the time of initiation gives to the aspirant, a first-hand inner experience, howsoever of the lowest order it may be, of spirituality. This can, in course of time, by regular *Sadhan* or practice of spiritual discipline, be developed. All scriptures give a fine record of the teachings of this Natural Yoga, which is not the reserved right of any particular sect or religion. As God is for all mankind, the Masters of this science are also for one and all. As one proceeds on the spiritual path, unknown vistas open to view, revealing undreamt of spiritual realms. But such experiences are possible only through the Grace of a Satguru.

In brief, no one can possibly travel on the God-way all by himself without the aid of an unerring guide, call him what one may—a God-man, *Murshid-i-Kamel* (Perfect Master), or *Rahbar-i-Haq* (Guide to the realm of Truth). It is then absolutely necessary that a seeker after Truth, must make a quest for some Perfect Master well versed in the theory as well as practice of *Surat Shabd Yoga*. It is immaterial if one were to spend his entire life span in

search of a really competent Master and may have in the attempt, to wander from place to place, in all the ten directions of the compass—for strait is the path sharper than the razor's edge, narrow is the gate and few there be that find it. A perfect Master veritably leads the soul from darkness to light, from untruth to Truth and from death to immortality. He is a never failing friend, both here and hereafter.

"He remains ever with you whether you live
 or die,
And no matter whether you are here on earth
 or in the hereafter." —Maulvi Rumi

Again,—

"Even at the place of reckoning, He shall stand
 by thy side.'' —Suhi M.I

It is therefore said :

"O Nanak ! snap all wordly ties and search for
 a true friend,
The one shall leave thee even in life while the
 other shall accompany thee into the Beyond."
—Maru War M.5

In their company one can transcend body-consciousness and rise inte Cosmic-Consciousness and then on into Super-Consciousness, which lies far beyond the limits of Grand Dissolution and is eternally the same. All our toils and troubles are the result of our separation from the Power of God and with reunion, we can once again gain the Kingdom of God. It is

through the fault of the Primal Man (Adam) that we lost the Garden of Eden and it is through the Primal Man (the son of God) that one can have reconciliation with the Father (Spirit of God) behind the otherwise impenetrable veil of darkness (*Bajjar Kapat*) at the back of the eyes and enjoy eternal beatitude while basking in the light of Heaven.

Farid, a Muslim saint of great renown, emphatically directs: "O Farid, start on a world-wide quest for some Master-soul. Carry on a ceaseless search, high or low, right or left, in short anywhere and everywhere, for once you are able to find out a Man of Grace, you too shall have Grace." Such a one not only tells us of the Way and is with us always, but naturally accompanies us on the Way, as a Guide from plane to plane—from mundane physical world right up to Sachkhand or the Abode of Truth.

When a spirit transcends the physical body and crosses over to the preliminary regions of stars, the sun and the moon, it comes face to face with the Luminous Form of the Master and it is then said to have taken a second birth. From here the Master takes charge of the soul and takes it on from plane to plane. Christ, too, speaks of it as: "Unless you are *born anew*, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God." This is *Birth of the Spirit*, as distinguished from the *Birth of the Water*. While the latter is of the

Corruptible Seed, the former is of the *Seed Incorruptible*.

Henceforth the spirit or the soul is under the charge of the Master and no power of darkness can tempt It.

The teachings of the saints are, as said above, the most ancient and the most natural and the most suited to all ranks, ages, and all types of persons irrespective of sex, caste, colour or creed. This is the most natural way, and has been all along the same and never changed and is learnt from a competent Master only. Every individual soul can verify the truth of these teachings by taking to them even as an experimental measure.

Sectarianism:

The worldly people generally believe that ethical codes of individual and social conduct as enjoined in all religions are the be-all and end-all. They fix their faith either on one or another of the scriptures or simply depend blindly on ancient religious heads of past ages. This is not spirituality but narrow sectarianism, which like parasitical willows, thrives and grows fat on the word *religion*. As a result, the very spirit of religion itself is smothered and is reduced to mere rites, rituals and ceremonials. The poor psyche possessed with these empty trumperies and sham tinsel is so overwhelmed with narrow prejudices that it begins to indulge in a devil's dance of wholesale killing and destruction.

The pity is, that all this is done in the name of religion. In this way religion which originated with the sole end of bringing about a reunion of individual spirit with God, goes underground. Spiritual sanctity, which is the kernel and life-principle, gradually disappears under the dust of ages and the mass of verbiage. The so-called exponents of religions not being persons of realisation engage in intellectual wrangles and confine themselves to the philosophic and polemical part of religion. In their enthusiasm to show off their learning, they begin building theories upon theories, with not an iota of practical wisdom in them. Religion, meant originally as a practical field for the play of the spirit, is thus reduced to a platform for political, social or philosophic disputations.

As sects grow, the hydra-headed sectarianism displays theories with innumerable forms and rituals. Each sect claims to be the sole guardian of the religion and custodian of the correct religious beliefs and ideas, little knowing that religion is not a bundle of theories but a practical subject concerned with the freedom of soul from the bondage of mind and matter. In their enthusiasm, they forget the Reality and lay stress on the purity of outward observances and performances. The present day religions are now no more than social orders and are chiefly concerned with keeping the society in a state

free from corruption. Religion in the true sense of the word, as *Way back to God* is but one—an inner process—but unfortunately, we have cut so many channels without that we cannot now think of it apart from the mess that we have made of this sacrament. The leaders of each sect preach respect for a particular individual or a particular book that they hold in esteem and not for all the scriptures and all the saints and sages, past and present. So instead of seeing the universal light common to all mankind, we run after a ray here and a ray there and discard the Sun of Spirituality that is at the core of all the religions. In this way we so dwarf our visions and mental horizon that we cannot see anything beyond our nose, and gradually begin to lose sight of Truth, the eternal and the unchangeable permanence, and cannot tolerate what others have to say. With smoke-coloured glasses, we look darkly at everything with a sense of doubt, distrust, and suspicion. It is we who build and set up narrow limitations, grow thorny hedges to protect our petty beliefs, to the exclusion of what the *Master-souls* have taught since the day of creation. Religions, thus, have grown into rigid water-tight compartments, protected preserves for individual game, incapable of expansion to embrace the totality of existence, the entire universe which is the manifestation of the living

principle of God. The church dogmas have built institutions out of the eclectic and elastic teachings of the Masters and instead of their living and soothing touch and influence, we are confronted with the rigid forms and formularies set up by those who followed the founders of the great religions and they work as so many fetters for keeping us enchained and enmeshed. Whosoever thinks freely and tries to escape their clutches is dubbed a heretic and an apostate, is prosecuted, excommunicated, exorcized, as if he were an evil spirit. Such leaders are, however, far removed from the universal religion of love. The human birth is the highest in the creation and the greatest benefit that accrues from it is the possibility in the human life to reach God and acquire love for His creatures, in whatsoever form, but unfortunately with his moorings cut off from the *Reality*, man has made an enemy of man, and instead of being the lovers of God and His devotees, men have constituted themselves into custodians of religion and leaders of men.

"To be worldly is but to turn one's back on
God,
And to pine for and hear the tales other
than those of God."

—A Mohammedan Saint

Again,

"Ye can gain the merit of all the teachings and
preachings,

If ye turn away from the world and commune with Truth." —A Mohammedan Saint

This earth, instead of being a veritable heaven for which we so zealously wish and pray every day, has turned into a veritable hell of mutual distrust, class jealousies, communal hatred, national antagonism, and international discord. Self-aggrandisement at the cost of others has become the rule of life. While talking of peace, we actually preach unrest, disharmony and discontent. All this is nothing but the natural concomitant of narrow sectarianism, born of dark ignorance in which we are steeped to the very marrow of our bones. Instead of making them lovers of God and all humanity, we are enchained to the societies like anything and consider it a heinous crime to go to other societies.

The Origin of Religion:

The quest for the Immanent and All-powerful Entity began ever since the self-consciousness dawned on living creatures. The endless limitations in which the Spirit finds itself, the insufficiency and incompleteness surrounding it on all sides, the utter helplessness in the face of death, in illness and in sufferings, all combine to stir up in man, a longing to find out the source of all life, all light, all happiness and all Bliss. He seeks a power with which he could combat all evil, fight the dark forces of the negative power,

chase away pain and misery and be established in the unchangeable permanence in this ever-changing universe. He wants to find the central permanent point round which the eternal dance of creation and destruction goes on ceaselessly.

The roots of all religions are to be found in the attempt of man from age to age, to solve this mystery of duality: life and death, light and darkness, truth and untruth, opulance and poverty. Dissatisfied with his surroundings, he begins the eternal search anew and turns to the why and wherefore of things.

He now tries to find the substratum of life itself, the source from which the creative life-principle springs, which enlivens the body and the bodily adjuncts and activates everything around him. Once this question takes hold of a person, it never leaves him and he plunges himself headlong into the problem and seeks to solve the mystery in whatever way he can. He begins his search first of all in the creeds and beliefs of the age and the surroundings in which he lives. But when all these fail to satisfy him and he discovers himself in the wilderness of different ideologies, conflicting theories, heterogeneous postulates and conclusions, he feels bewildered and helpless to chalk out for himself the Way-out. Next, he turns to the scriptures and the religious text for the solace of his mind but here too he is confronted with insurmountable

difficulties; want of knowledge of the archaic languages in which they are written, the subtlety of the subject, lack of practical men of realisation to give him their correct and true import.

The momentous quest now takes another turn. He breaks through all the barriers of age-old traditions and customs, socialistic and ritualistic performances and the customary codes of conduct, so that he may discover the hidden light and the Power of God—the lost Word—something greater and more powerful than what he has experienced hitherto in the outer world. From the search without he gradually withdraws his attention and begins to concentrate on the thought of *self* within. In this way he comes to distinguish between *Religion* and *religiosity* or religious beliefs and practices all of which are connected with the sensory plane only. The seeds of life lie in the depths of life itself—the spirit or the soul—(as in the case of every living thing, even plants and flowers). Spirituality is concerned with the most vital problems of the *Spirit* alone—what it is, where it dwells, how it works, how it can be concentrated to dwell upon itself, how it can be separated from the folds of the body and mind, where does it go after death, how it can voluntarily be withdrawn from the sensory plane of the body, the specifical journey that lies ahead, the various spiritual planes that it has to traverse, its

ultimate goal, besides so many other topics of an allied nature connected with its well being. This then is the religion of the soul, quite distinct and apart from the social and moral well being of an individual, both of which depend on his spiritual well being. *Sound mind in a sound body* is a well known aphorism, but *sound soul* at the back of them both is of paramount importance because mind and body live by the soul, the great dynamo or motor power in the life and light of which all these adjuncts work.

This search for the *true self* though full of mysteries, has untold possibilities and immense spiritual treasures within, of which the saints sing in glorious terms, now attract the attention of the seeker. It is purely a subjective subject and lies beyond the pale of reasoning and imagination. It is a '*Wisdom of the Beyond*' (Para Vidya) and can be experienced by the soul in its pure nakedness, released from all the enshrouding sheaths.

We cannot but repeat the memorable words of Guru Nanak, in this context :

"One cannot comprehend Him through reason, even if one reasoned for ages,

One cannot achieve inner peace by outward silence, though one sat dumb for ages ;

One cannot buy contentment with all the riches of the world, nor reach Him with all mental ingenuity :

How may one know the Truth and break
through the cloud of falsehood ?
There is a Way, O Nanak ! to make His Will
our own,
His Will which is already wrought in our
existence." —Jap Ji, St.I

Once convinced of the futility of all outer knowledge and wisdom, performances and observances, the search within becomes a passion with the true seeker after Truth, for self-realisation is a key to God-realisation. St. Augustine once sitting on the seashore with his great work 'De Trinate', saw a child taking the sea-water by a shell and pouring into a hole he had made in the sand. Inquired as to what he was doing, the child naively replied that he was trying to empty the ocean. The great sage explained to him the futility of all his endeavours, as it was an impossibility. Exactly the same is the position in the case of God-knowledge for He, the Infinite, cannot be known by the finite individual trying to grasp Him at the level of the intellect. How can a part know the whole ? Self, the basis of all conscious life, cannot be cognised by the conscious mind or intellect. A thing based on Realities, cannot be real and cannot know the real. Even of the yogic methods as means to still the mind for self-realisation, Gaudpada, the famous forerunner of Patanjli the author of the yoga

systems, thousands of years before spoke about such afforts as strivings of a person to empty the ocean drop by drop by the tip of a blade of grass.

From the above it would be abundantly clear that the germs of all religions are located in self-questionings and self-communings of the great souls. Here all religious philosophies end and the true religion begins. By degrees this inner search proceeds and one by one, the *koshas* or the coverings of the spirit are analysed, pierced through and discarded ; peeled off layer by layer in the deep inner silence of the mind, until the mental apparatus itself also drops off like a tattered garment, leaving the soul free and resplendent in its pristine luminosity, more lustrous than the light of several suns put together. This is called *evolution of the Spirit* or *unfoldment of the Reality,* shrouded as it is in innumerable coverings to start with. Self-knowledge (or Atma Sidhi) precedes God-knowledge (or Paramatma Sidhi).

It is only when the spirit comes to its own and is freed from all the earthly ties and the bodily trappings ; physical, astral and causal, that it is in a position to apprehend and appreciate or feel the presence of God or Reality. The senses, the mind, and the intellect, in their gross nature, ever fail to know and understand the Reality by means of logic, philosophy and

metaphysics. It is the spirit in its original purity, when disengaged and disentangled from the various trappings, that can contact Godhood. Spirituality in its true sense, as described above, can neither be bought, nor taught, but may be caught, as if it were an infection, from some God-man. All learning through books, lectures or philosophic disputations cannot make a person spiritual.

The love of God may be seen in the love-laden eyes of the Son-of-God. His liquid eyes betray the Divine intoxication in them. They are cups bubbling over with God's life, love and light. Herein lies the hiatus between sectarianism, the great scriptures of the world, the so-called religions as confined, cribbed and cramped in the pages of sacred and monumental works of the ancients, in languages too ancient, too archaic and too technical to be understood on the one hand—and spirituality, the science of the Soul or true religion of the spirit, on the other. The latter is the common heritage of the entire humanity, catholic in its approach, unlimited in its scope and unfettered by anyone's professed belief, faith and religious notions. It is an inner process of the spirit ; and all saints preach of nothing but spirituality in its pure and undiluted and unalloyed form.

God is the Divine ground on which life, mind and matter make their play, and all these cannot

possibly know of the very life of their life. Saints, therefore, emphasise that this Divine ground can only be felt by intuition when directly experienced by realisation which is possible only by the sixth sense or the inner eye. That center is also known as *Nukta-i-Swaida*, the Third Eye, the Divine Vision, the Single Eye. Christ says that it "shall fill the whole body with light"—light uncreate, perennial and everlasting, light which is self-existent and shadowless, light that never is on land or sea. This is why Jesus, the Prophet, asks us to beware lest the light in the body turn into darkness : "The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The outer symbol of this, we see now-a-days, in the lighted candles at church altars, the earthen lamps in temples and gurdwaras, now of course replaced by electric light, the ever-burning fires in Zoroastrian homes.

Akin to the Single Eye is also the Voice of God (the Kalma of the Muslims, the Word of Christ, the Sruti of the Vedas, Udgit of the Upanishads, Sarosha of the Zorastrians, Elan Vital or the Life Current of the western philosphers, Voice of Silence of the Theosophists) within the body which we cannot hear as our ears have been waxed and sealed. This great truth is symbolized in outer life with the conches in the temples, the gongs in the gurdwaras and

Buddhist temples and the bells in church belfries and *Jaras* (Big bell) of the Sufis. The saints in all climes and in all times have made frequent references to this phenomenon in all their teachings and writings.

The true religion or spirituality consists in linking the soul with Oversoul in its manifested play of light and sound in the God-made temple of the human body. The more the spirit withdraws from without and transcends its limitations—physical, astral and causal—the more experience it gets of the spiritual phenomena, with the Grace of the Master. Such is vouchsafed to one who has prepared for death in life at will—for unless one learns to die daily, one cannot have life everlasting. Bergson, the great philosopher calls it—"*open religion*" as contradistinguished from "*closed religions*," that is religions sealed down in ancient and immutable scriptures, spoken of and taken to be the last word.

Religions have now been reduced to the mere performance of charitable deeds, observance of rites, rituals and ceremonials like fasts and pilgrimages ; wearing of particular apparel ; white, yellow, blue, flame-coloured or ochre robes ; keeping peculiar marks on the body like tuft of hair on the head, sacred thread across the shoulder, circumcision or the five *Kakas* which have no substantial bearing, however remote, on

the advancement of soul towards self-realisation and God-realisation.

The prime need of the age is a living Reality, a dip in the ocean of life, a sip of the elixir of life, a vision of the Divine Light that may bestow immortality and lead to efflorescence of the spirit into Godhood. This is what Sri Aurobindo says ; "Contacting the Super-mind and drawing it down to divinize all life, mind and matter. It is the common birthright of all created beings and not the monopoly of any nation or class of individuals professing this or that faith or belief."

Man by nature is a composite being : the component parts being body, mind and soul. God made man after His own image and so the saints ordain—"Be thou as perfect as thy Father in Heaven is." Thrice blessed is man on account of the immense and immeasurable possibilities that have been lodged in him by the Maker. The very Divinity with holy light, life and love, is the very soul of his soul. But alas, what man has made of man and worse still of himself—no better than a beast or even worse than that.

It behoves man as man to be rich, abundantly rich, in all the three aspects of his life—as distinguished from the mutilated, maimed and moth-eaten existence that he now has through ignorance of self-knowledge. This creation is a double process ; involution with evolution. The

Divinity involved in the very nature of the spirit, mind and matter has to be evolved, enlarged and developed until it completely and fully coincides with the Divine ground, the substrata on which in sheer ignorance it now plays its limited and cribbed part unmindful of its Godhood.

The physical self of the soul is endowed with ten instruments ; five *karam indrias* or motor powers, and five *Jnana indrias* or powers of perception, all of which help the body in its worldly dealings. The mind has been gifted with four facets : *mana* (mind-stuff), *chit* (consciousness), *buddhi* (intellect), and *ahankar* (ego) all of which operate in the world of senses and help the psyche in thinking and discrimination in the light of reason. Next, in the ascending scale comes soul, the great rider in the vehicle of the mind-driven body. Its instrument of action is *surat* (self-consciousness or attention born of the great consciousness). This attention, if properly helped and guided, brings about singleness of purpose, fixity in aim, collects and gathers up the wandering faculties of the mind from the senses as identified with objects and immersed in their enjoyment.

While the body works, the mind discriminates and the psyche enjoys happiness. Should the three component parts, body, mind and attention (soul) be brought in harmony at one common center, the life on earth of the poor,

limited and bound psyche, becomes a real blessing, eternal and everlasting, possessing all the attributes of the supramental consciousness: namely, *Sat—Chit—Anand* (existence, consciousness and bliss).

A person who devotes his attention to the body building process grows in physical strength with muscles fully developed and well-knit, he is looked upon as an embodiment of radiant health, and is admired by hundreds of people who see him. A person who devotes his attention to the development of his mental powers, acquires a keen and sharp intellect, grows into an intellectual giant and inspires thousands of persons by his powerful speeches and writings. Again, one who takes to the development of the self or spirit in him, he is divinised and in course of time becomes a God-man and Godhood shines in him through and through. He sheds heavenly lustre among great gatherings and audiances that come into his fold and as a tower of spirituality he serves as a beacon light to all and sundry in the stormy sea of life. This is the *yoga* of hand, heart and head combind into one and makes a person an integrated whole, perfect as the Father in Heaven is. All this and still more comes to him by communion with and practice of the Word (the Music of the Soul or Song of the *Pranva*), which reverberates ceaselessly in and around him. This is the true

religion, a religion of the living spirit (Truth), a religion in cash or '*open religion*' of Bergson. There is, in fact, no religion higher than this, giving life and light alike to one and all and makes man thrice blessed—blessed in body, mind and soul—fit to be worshipped and adored not only by his fellow beings but even by the angels, as ordained by God, when He makes him after His own image.

This human body is a veritable temple of God, wherein the spirit or the soul can be attuned to listen to the Divine Music within. It can be made to witness and enjoy the Divine Light, and enabled to get Divine revelations like the prophets of old. When once it experiences the Supreme Bliss, all attachments of the world fall off by themselves, lose their glamour and charm. Psyche, freed from oblivion blossoms forth into a new life—the life of spirit as distinguished from the life of senses. This is spirituality, this is the true religion into the mysteries of which only a saint or a Master-soul initiates a true seeker and aspirant by unlocking the door leading to the Kingdom of God, which is right within us. About this door, Christ says : "*Knock and it shall be opened unto thee.*"

Religion : Outer and Inner

While physical sciences deal with and impart knowledge of the physical, sensual world, the

ethical codes of conduct are concerned with an individual as a member of society and lay down rules of social relationship between the two. Spirituality, or science of the spirit tells us about its evolution or unfoldment (a process of liberating it from the various sheaths or coverings in which it is clothed), its identical nature with God, and how it can be linked with the Divine Reality, its very source and fountainhead and achieve its Godhood and be blessed forever.

The science of the Masters is an experimental science and like any physical science is capable of yielding results with mathematical accuracy. These results can very well be verified from the transformations that one can witness in the life of a man of *sadhan* (or one who practices spiritual discipline). It does not mean book-learning or accumulation of knowledge, but it means the coming into its own of the spirit and its taking a new birth in cosmic awareness and rising into supramental or super consciousness. This realisation brings with it a blessed calmness and thereafter the immanence of God is always felt and the actual working of the Divine Will becomes manifest. Reason and intellect fail to comprehend the Infinite Reality. Even after realisation, words but beggar one's attempt to describe the indescribable. This experimentation in Godhood can only be attempted and achieved in utter silence and stillness both of

the mind and the intellect, when like a revelation, His Light and Sound dawn upon the soul.

The knowledge of the world is far different from that of God. We are wholly engrossed in *Apravidya* and are totally ignorant of *Paravidya* (or knowledge of the Beyond). We make all possible efforts to rid ourselves of physical ailments but have never even thought of the subtle maladies that afflict the inner self, or how low we are in the scale of human values and how helplessly we drift along the current of life whether we wish it or not. We spend our entire life-span in eating, drinking, and dozing, but care not a bit to know the sub-strata of the very life itself. Ever engaged as we are in the objective world, we cannot introvert and witness the glories of the world within.

A person who for seeing depends on his outer eyes, for hearing on his ears, for talking on his tongue, is in reality not a living person but a dead one, a breathing bellows with no life in it. As God abides within, we must peep inside, if we want to meet Him, to experience Him, and to have His blessings. God pervades everywhere in the form of *Naam* or *Shabd*, but we cannot hear His voice unless we turn away from the turmoil of the world and enter into the deep inner silence of the soul. As we go in and recede, we walk without feet, work without hands, see without eyes and hear without ears.

Guru Nanak therefore says in this context: "There one sees, hears, walks, works and talks without outer physical organs, *viz.*, eyes, ears, legs, hands and tongue provided he learns to die while living. O Nanak, know His Will and meet the Beloved." (Majh War M.2). Gosain Tulsi Das in the *Bal Kand* of the Ramayana also says the same thing.

To know God one must first know himself. Self-knowledge is possible only with inversion or turning the attention from outer pursuits and directing it within into the deep silence of the mind—technically called, the Divine-ground, behind the center of the two eyebrows. It is then only that the spirit experiences *Naam*, the Over-spirit, or God-in-action which is the *summum bonum* of all religious quests after the Great Unknown. Buddha asserts that it is possible to ascend to the greatest heights of Godhood only within ourselves. Schopenhauer, a great German philosopher, says that the fountainhead of all peace and blessed calm can be experienced within oneself. Christ emphatically declares: "The kingdom of God is within you." In Sikh Scriptures it is stated: "The precious waters of Immortality surge within one's very soul."

One can undertake this inward journey, without leaving one's hearth and home, forsaking kith and kin, or abandoning one's calling and avocation in life. This grand pilgrimage of

the soul can be performed in spite of wordly pursuits. All that is necessary is to get instruction from some living Master who holds the key to the Kingdom of God.

"O Nanak ! follow strictly the injunctions of a perfect Master capable to put you on the right Path,
You shall then gain salvation happily while living the life of a householder in the midst of your family and friends."

—Gujri War M.5

One need not leave the world and retire into the deep recesses of the forests to achieve this goal. The entire mystery can be resolved in the solitude of the mind.

"There is no greater sanctuary than that of one's soul." —Basant M.5

An aspirant can, by practice, still the mind, even in the midst of the hustle and bustle of life, and can, at will, retire into the silent chamber of the Divine ground. Unless the mind is stilled, an abode in a forest or by the side of a stream cannot be of any avail.

Every religion has two aspects or divisions, one is social and the other is spiritual. The social side consists in making ethical rules of conduct which aim at rectifying social evils, developing society on healthy lines, observing certain rites and rituals and performing charitable deeds. With such like, one may make the

best use for preparing the ground for higher spiritual life. The spiritual aspect of religions deals, solely and primarily with the spirit, an investigation into its nature, its relation with body and mind, the way it can be detached from both these appendages and how it can be linked up with *Naam* or *Word*, leading to realization of and identification with the Great Ocean of Consciousness.

Man is no doubt a social being but society can only rest safely on the bedrock of spirituality. Just as spirit enlivens the human body, so does spirituality give life and sustenance to society, without which all types of social evils like narrow-mindedness, petty prejudices, selfish aggrandizement, clash and conflict gradually creep into its very vitals and make it enervating gangrenous and septic.

In these days there is no dearth of social reform, but what we woefully lack is self-reform. Society has no doubt made a tremendous advance in the realms of science and art, politics and philosophy and has not only unravelled the the mysteries of nature but has actually harnessed most of the forces of nature and pressed them into its service in various ways. All this, however, has been achieved at a great cost and a mighty sacrifice—sacrifice of one's own spirit or soul. The natural result therefore is that with all this material advancement and multiplicity of material comforts we are as far removed

from happiness as we were before. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain of the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16 : 26).

Man must in the fitness of things first know himself and have the experience of the Reality. Once this is achieved, it matters not whether a person remains a householder or renounces the world and becomes an anchorite. The path of the Masters is purely spiritual. They (the Masters), of course have to remain in the one or the other of the social orders, but their only mission is to bring home the ultimate truth to embodied souls, who are steeped in darkness. This they do by means of the *Surat Shabd Yoga.*

The Masters enjoin all to join the army of God, and take the various social religions as the recruiting centres therefor. They therefore continue to stand aloof from social squabbles, racial wrangles and religious recriminations. They do not come to destroy the existing religious orders or to raise new orders, but to purify and elevate the existing ones, restore them to their original pristine glory in which they were set up by their founders. They try to remove the mass of useless accretions that gather round them through the ages and pull them out of the morass into which they sink and strengthen them by transfusion of the blood of spirituality into their decaying veins.

At the bottom of all religions there is the age-old Truth and the tradition of Spirituality, both of which have by lapse of time, almost been lost. Religion is now nothing but an outer husk of rites and rituals. But the Masters actually experience the same Reality, which is given in the sacred scriptures by the *rishis* and *munis* who came in the past. As such, their teachings are not based on any sacred scriptures nor are these held fast and tight in the rigours of religiosity. They are concerned with *Para-vidya* alone (the science of the spirit which is beyond the realm of thought, reason and intellect). This knowledge, experience and realisation can neither be learnt nor taught but may be caught like any other infection, from a person infected with it. Men enter the Path by coming in contact with Master-souls, listening to their words of wisdom, attending their discourses and following their teachings both in letter and spirit. In this way the Masters attract, magnetize and divinize the spirit, thereby removing all vacillations of the mind and rendering it immune forever from the onslaughts of matter and the material world. The spirit thus freed from all the shackles that bind her to the material plane is enabled to take up unfettered flights to higher regions that lie beyond the human ken. Such travels are a matter of experience by the soul alone;

apart from mind and intellect. These outgoing faculties remain helpless, far down in the abyss below with nothing to sustain and enliven them, so long as the spirit is absorbed in higher spiritual experiences.

The spiritual teachings of all Masters in all ages and in all countries is one and the same, though described in different words and languages which may be prevailing at a particular time in a particular country. They come with the message of spirituality and their sole object is to spiritualize human beings by linking them with *Naam* or Oversoul and helping them in the process of spiritual evolution and unfoldment. Their teachings are therefore termed *Ilm-i-Seena* or *Ilm-i-Laduni* (knowledge of the inner man or soul, the knowledge of reality), which is the inner experience of the soul without any outer aids. It is the very core of all knowledge and by it everything else becomes known. It is the most natural science and like other natural gifts of light, air and water—costs nothing. It is the common heritage of the entire humanity and can be claimed as such, by one and all alike without any obligation, from any Master-soul. Saints are the children of Light and they come to diffuse Light into the universe.

"I am the Light of the world, and he that
followeth me shall not walk in darkness
but shall have the Light of Life."

—John 8 : 12

Science and Religion:

Scientists think that religion is just a bundle of superstitious beliefs, and that a person without religion can be as contended, peaceful and happy as one with religion. Atheists or those who do not believe in God assert that religion is the opiate of the people. The religious people on the other hand maintain that science has, by the invention of deadly and diabolical instruments of destruction and devastation, sown in the world dragons' teeth of discord, discontent and disruption. The scientists admit that a person is a complex of body and mind, and if one were to take care of the mind, the spirit, if any, would take care of itself. They are sceptical, both of spirit and God.

For the Master-souls, spirit alone is the real entity, but it is entangled in the prison-house of body and mind. Their mission is to liberate the spirit from the various sheaths in which it is enshrouded and to link it up with the Word or God-in-action (Holy Ghost), about which they have personal experiences. This evolution of the spirit is real salvation, but very few understand the true significance of it. Some feel that it consists just in petrification, while others think that it amounts to *nihilism* or atheism, i.e. denial of all existence and rejection of all moral and religious beliefs. But each of these conceptions is far from the truth. In

fact, mind stands as a connecting link between body and bodily relations and this linking up is bondage ; while breaking asunder of this relationship is called salvation. The primary step in this direction is *Gurbhakti*, or devotion to a living Master, and the next is practice of *Naam* or Word which ultimately leads to Sachkhand or *Muqam-i-Haq* (the abode of Truth). "O Hafiz ! the Paradise or Heaven is our birthright and a heritage."

If one were to consider deeply and earnestly, the advantages and limitations of both science and religion, one would find a close connection between the two. Environments exert a two-fold influence on all living objects : external as well as internal, both of which are universal in character. Man is endowed with intellect, reason and discrimination (which the rest of the creation lacks), by which he is able to control his environments. A person remains happy so long as there is harmony between his internal and external relations. If things shape themselves as one wishes, one feels contented and happy. Experience shows that this state of harmony between the ever-wishful man and his environments is not static, and does not last long. On the contrary, both of these are ever-changing.

It has ever been the endeavour of man to find a way that may assure a state of perfect and

unchangeable harmony between himself and his environments. One way is to control the conditions without, to an extent that may satisfy the needs of a person, whatever the same may be. The other way is to regulate one's inner urges and inborn instincts in such a way as to develop an utter indifference to the ever-shifting environments without, so that he does not react to the influx of changing conditions in which all things are. The former effort is scientific in nature, while the latter is purely religious.

The realm of science extends from electrons to the stars. It embraces in its fold all objects of the world that can influence human feelings and emotions; in fact, everything that is capable of being comprehended by the senses. The inner world on the other hand is entirely different and unique in character. Our motor and sensory organs which work so admirably in the material world, cannot invert easily and take stock of the mental world within. It is full of immense possibilities and untold treasures of spirituality all of which lie within one's reach and grasp, if one could but know how to enter into one's own self.

Again, there comes in the value and advantage of quantity in the material objects. For instance two halves of a bread go to make one whole, but two half-wits cannot make one wise man.

Further we have instruments and implements that help us in material investigations and the conclusions arrived at in the course of our experiments are verifiable in actual practice. These are some of the reasons that contribute to the importance of scientific truths. Every day scientific experiments are being performed and will continue to be performed endlessly. What is true today may not be so tomorrow. But that is not the case with religion. Truth is Truth, all the same and shall be Truth always. It, however, guarantees perpetual happiness and everlasting bliss by regulating the inborn instincts and the native urges of the mind, rendering it unmindful of the changing conditions without.

The path of religion is strewn with many impediments. All persons including saints are mortal, and after they leave the physical plane, the followers in their blind enthusiasm, introduce and interpolate in their teachings, things which they never uttered or, at least, they never meant. The so-called philosophical treatises are so full of distortions and apparent conflict with each other that one feels as though they were lost in a wilderness.

In order that one may reach the spiritual heights of a Master-soul, one must, according to his instructions, enter into the laboratory of one's own body and carry on the experiments

therein. Again, the results achieved may differ from one individual to another, owing to the separate make-up and background in each case. The conclusions thus reached and the time taken in each case, is, therefore, of a purely personal nature and not of a universal kind as in science. It is because of this that we cannot possibly have an experience of spiritual life, from the different types of worship conducted in temples and mosques, churches and synagogues or from the sacred scriptures of various religions. A living Master, who has successfully transcended the body and the mind and who has an actual experience of the naked Reality beyond all limitations and barriers, can tell us something solid of the Great Truth. By personal guidance and instruction, He can help in the withdrawal of the spirit from the physical and mental shackles and bring within one's actual experience that which He has experienced.

What a man has done, a man can do, of course with proper guidance and help. The Master's personal contact, His thought transference, His charged words and magnetized personality, all go a long way in the transformation of individual souls. Whosever comes and remains within the personal aura of a Master, is elecrified and attuned to the Infinite Energy with which He is possessed and which He emits, transmits and injects into the aspirants. This

benefit can also be had even from thousands of miles, if one develops receptivity with such a Master.

Life-impulse comes from life, and light from light, both in the physical and spiritual worlds alike. The technique of religion, too, is subject to certain fundamental laws like the technique of science, with this difference only that we are yet unaware of the former as we have paid but scant attention to it and cannot therefore harness it to our advantage. Purity of life and highly ethical conduct in thoughts, words and deeds is the prerequisite for a sadhu or an aspirant for the spiritual path. Mind has to be stilled after freeing it from all kinds of outer disturbances, inner lures and urges, and environmental glamour or clouds and frowns. Just as in the case of a scientific experiment, one has to enter a laboratory and see that all his instruments are thoroughly neat and clean, properly sterilized. And again, before beginning the operation, all the doors and windows are closed, so that he may carry on his work undisturbed from outer influences, and with undivided attention.

It is a matter of common experience that people take pride in scrupulously following age-old customs and keeping up ancient traditions blindly, little knowing that out-of-date coins, howsoever precious and of historical importance

and archeological interest they may be, have to be melted in the red-hot furnace, minted afresh, before passing them as current coins for fresh circulation in the market. In the twentieth century, it is of paramount importance, to prune off the unnecessary accretions that have in course of time, gathered round the eternal spiritual truths. We should free them from the encrusted dust of ages that has settled on them, and present them afresh to the public in a positive and readily acceptable form as current coins of the time.

The present day prejudices, internecine jealousies and narrow-minded bigotries that we see in the various religious bodies, were never intended by their founders. Such evils are purely of a later growth, due to extraneous influences of the zealous exponents, fierce commentators and controversialists who twist and torture the simple fundamental truths to suit their own ends and gain cheap *peshwaship* (leadership) that may bring them name, fame, pelf and power. The hoary wine of spirituality has, therefore, to be delved out from the old forgotten cellars, and presented to tipplers in new bottles that may appeal to their imagination so that they take it readily and willingly to quench their thirst, without any labels and brands.

Man is a compound of body and soul. To the extent that a person has a material body, he is governed by the laws of the matter (e.g. gravity, cohesion, impermeability, conductivity etc.) ; and to the extent he is an animal being he is governed by organic laws (e.g. nutrition, growth, development and self-propagation etc.). Again, he is a conscious entity or a sentient being and as such the laws of consciousness (e.g. producing a sense of hunger, thirst, discomfort, and self-development) are also applicable to him, and he works for a happy, carefree and comfortable living. So long as a person is attached to material things and material comforts, he is subject to suffering and pain ; but when he submits himself to the organic laws of the soul, he becomes blessed and happy. Kabir Sahib, therefore, says : "The embodied soul is never restful and blessed. For man, wheresoever he may be, there is all discomfort and distress." Lord Buddha also declared that physical life is all misery, Nanak saw the entire world writhing in invisible flames.

Idolatry consists in paying all attention to the nourishment and ornamentation of the physical body ; while beautifying the soul and linking it with God is God-worship indeed. Woe be to us who are utterly ignorant of the living spirit in the body and how it can be

decked, dressed and embellished. The physical body is the veritable home and spirit is the indweller therein. In the fitness of things, one must first unearth the spirit and purify it, before cleansing the body. What does it profit a person to sweep the house, keep it neat and clean and embellish it with all sorts of decorations, only to keep the indweller or the soul, famine-stricken ?

Having forgotten our innate nature of Godhood, we have completely indentified our 'self' with the body, and always think, speak and act in terms of the body and bodily conditions and relations. When the very existence of the body depends on the spirit (or the life spark) in it, we must take care of the latter, think of It, give It timely food to keep It healthy and strong for on Its health and strength depend the glory and dignity of the body. The ever-changing body, which is subject to decay and death, may be looked after, just to keep it fit and going as any other vehicle of self-expression. But it should not be pampered and doted upon, so as to lose all thought of the self-enlivening life-flame in the body, the motor force that quickens the inert matter with life. Without that power it has no value at all and is considered fit to be consigned either to the flames or to the graveyard.

We must not forget that we are in reality sparks of Godhood quite distinct from the

material house in which we sojourn for the time being. It behoves us most, to learn all about this *Life Impulse* surging in and out in the entire creation, the fountainhead or the source of this life stream and how we can reach the same and attain eternal peace and happiness which is our heritage and our birthright. The great lesson of life can only be learnt from a Master-soul. Its alpha and beta begins with the voluntary withdrawal of the sensory current in the body until a state of detachment is achieved by concentration at the seat of the soul, behind the center of the two eyebrows, called eye-focus or *Til*. All this can be done only through the Grace of some perfect living Master—an adept, not only in the theory but also in the practice of the *Science of Soul*, who is capable of bringing the soul above the body consciousness and making others share His own experiences.

"Some Godly person may link us with God."

—Jaitsari M.5

When once the spirit is linked with divinity and engrafted in God, it gradually takes roots in its Native Soil, acquires and develops its natural attributes of the Divine ground on which it grows and thrives from day to day. This is called by all the sages in the East and the West, taking a *second birth* or being *born anew*, as Christ puts it. The *incorruptible seeds* of this spiritual birth are sown by some God-man when

we live up to him, and scrupulously follow his instructions which in technical parlance is called *Satsang* or company with *Sat*, the great Unchangeable Permanence in the midst of ever-changing panorama of life and the kaleidoscopic universe in which we live.

Handsome is the body in which the soul is attuned with God. All beauty including the physical beauty depends on the beauty of the spirit, which in turn rests on Union with the Divine Beauty.

"Blessed is the body in which the spirit dwells in union with her divine current,
The true Beloved grants her eternal life and one always lives in communion with the Master's Word." —Suhi M.3

Again,—

"A Master's devotee delves deep into the body and regards all else as a mere delusion,
He alone finds the crest jewel who has been so ordained, for cleverness is of no avail,
Blessed is the body that engages in the service of the Master, the True One having made it,
Without communion with Word, there is no freedom from the wiles of Kaal,
O Nanak ! he glorifies the Word, on whom God showers His mercy and grace." —Suhi M.3

Once a spirit becomes aware of Its native Godhood, and is dyed in the Divine colour, it becomes freed from the bondage of the world

and forever escapes from the cycle of births and deaths. But all this comes not from learning, knowledge or cunning devices but only from the grace of some Master-soul or God-man, who is competent to give an ingress into the Beyond by practical self-analysis.

The Ideal of Universal Religion :

The crying need of the time is to set up one universal religion for the entire mankind, which should be a compendium of all that is good in every religion. But is it possible ? Owing to differences in temperaments and modes of thinking, it is well nigh impossible to lay down rules of worship acceptable to all ; and to direct their varying thought-currents in one channel. With all this diversity, there is yet one thing which is common in all humanity. It is the Divine link with which the entire creation came into being and is being sustained. All religions, in spite of apparent differences in external forms and rituals are at bottom embedded in essentials which are exactly alike and similar. The Divine ground on which each of them rests is the same, and the huge mass of superstructure has been raised in each case on the bedrock of Divinity itself.

The problem that confronts us is to find a way whereby it may be possible to reach that Divine ground—the bedrock of Divinity. The essential roots of all religions are now lost to

view and utterly forgotten under the camouflage of ancient verbiage, the encrusted dust of ages and the dogmatic formularies of the priescraft. All that we need now is to present Truth, once again, to the scientific modern world, in a scientific setting. Religion instead of being a source of solace to souls, has now become an instrument of separation, hatred, ill-will and tyranny. In the blessed name of religion, fire and sword are oppressing humanity, innocent blood is being split and the fair face of earth is being defiled with destruction and ruin simply because over-emphasis is laid on non-essentials and external shells. The result is that people all the world over have come to have a kind of horror for the so-called religion which has failed to serve the common needs of humanity. Religion should bring union between man and man, nation and nation, knitting the world in common bonds of all-embracing love, fellowship and brotherhood.

Let religions now be confined to the ethical codes of social conduct and social order, to which they have already sunk. Let people be free to remain in the labelled categories in which they are born and to which they belong, but it is most important that we should try to find out and understand the essential roots of all religions. By diving deep within, the soul in each individual should try to rest on the Divine-ground and take hold of the common link

running through the entire creation—the source and fountainhead of all life. Unless all this is presented as a science, in theory, as well as in practice, people are not willing to listen and to accepts the fundamentals of all religions. They have to rise above the ritualistic forms and traditions, to which they have been wedded since time immemorial and to which they so tenaciously cling.

Religion in the real sense of the word means reunion with God. The saints are always in union with God. Whatever spiritual experiences they had in the spiritual realms, are recorded in the sacred scriptures for the benefit of mankind. "One has no right to dub the scriptures as fantastic or false, for false is he who does not ponder over the actual writings and does not try to understand their true import." —Kabir

Whosoever gets an experience with God, loves the entire humanity. He feels within him a realisation of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It may therefore be taken for certain that those who preach hatred and sow the seeds of ill-will in God's creation, have not yet any experience of the Creator.

The personal experience with God which a soul has is in reality a true religion. Unless the spiritual experiences as recorded in sacred lore are actually had by us, through the Grace of a living Master, we continue to be atheists or agnostics and know not what religion is.

God has made man after His own image. Hence it behoves man to be as perfect as the Father. This becomes possible only when a person learns to understand His Will and works in accordance with the same. This is the true religion and true faith, while all else is sham and tinsel.

If we were to analyse the sacred books of all religions, we would find that the spiritual truths as contained therein, are the fine records of actual spiritual experiences of their founders. These Master-souls have always emphasised the spiritual aspect of human life and have emphatically declared that in the human body there is a separate entity called *spirit* which is Unchangeable Permanence. They hold that this entity could be equally developed as other faculties, physical, mental and intellectual, within the ever-changing physical raiment of the material world.

The enjoyment of wordly objects is not an ideal state. Realisation of the self should be the goal of man. All religious books tell us of the way whereby a spirit can have an experience of the Vast Consciousness and Super Consciousness and thereby lead a truly spiritual life, which, however, does not consist in blind beliefs, faithful performance of rites and rituals and scrupulous observance of social and ethical rules of conduct. To know the Truth, is the

be-all and the end-all of all religions. The fundamental teachings of all, center round the realisation of *Shabd, Naam, Kalma* or Word, all of which are different names for one and the same thing : Godhood, God-in-action, or the Holy Ghost. The spiritual advancement is possible and can be achieved only when the spirit contacts this *Naam* or *Shabd**, hence this type of union with the Sound-current is known as *Surat Shabd Yoga.*

We must study all religions with love and devotion, adopt and accept as a workable formula, the common Divine-ground underlying each. The different religious books like the Vedas, the holy Bible, the sacred Quran and Sri Adi Granth Sahib and all other scriptures are so many pages of the interminable Book of God to which others may be added from time to time. In this materialistic age, it is necessary that the common spiritual truths be collected at one place and presented to mankind as a beautiful bouquet. The awakened people all over the world are realising the truth of it and are forming world conferences of religions to place before mankind the basic ideas common to all religions, so that spirituality may be placed on the footing of a regular science to which all seekers after Truth may turn regardless of their castes

*For fuller detail of *Naam* or *Word*, refer to book "*Naam* or *Word.*"

or creeds and without disturbing the social orders to which they belong. The present day attempt to hold All World Religious Conferences, to establish World Fellowship of Religions and to set up institutions for the comparative study of all religions and to conduct investigations into the cardinal principles of Truth, Love and Non-violence are steps in the right direction and point to the time when the whole world will be knit together in the silken bonds of one universal religion of love and humanity.

A Peep Inside :

We spend most of our time in admiring the outer surface of worldly things and care not to see the very soul of the matter that lies hidden underneath and bespeaks the Great Creator, the creative life-principle, without which even the surface beauty cannot exist for a fraction of a second. Again, the outer raiment of everything is subject to disease, decay and in course of time, to dissolution ; while the Ultimate Truth at the core is the only Unchangeable Permanence. We, however, choose to analyze the husk or chaff of the matter, probe into its mysteries, try to conquer and harness it to our benefit. To a great extent, we have succeeded in our endeavours to press Nature's gifts to our service. But we have not cared to find out the Immanent Presence that pervades everywhere and is the *alpha* and *omega* of the entire creation.

That person alone is wise who takes the pearl out of the oyster shell and is not concerned with the latter. All outer coverings are provided by Nature for lodging therein something precious, something of intrinsic value. Would it were that we could first peep within before evaluating the things of the world. We have at present no idea whatsoever of the higher values of the life, and we have not yet been able to separate the grain from the chaff. Ignorant as we are, we act like fools, dazzled by the surface glamour and are deluded by shapes and forms, colour-designs that meet our gaze, little knowing that we are like bloated bubbles which shine for a while and in the twinkling of an eye vanish like airy nothings into the thin air.

The saints and seers have referred in their precious writings, to the spiritual treasures that lie buried within each individual and tell us of the way whereby we can delve deep and find them out. The secret of the very macrocosm may be found in the microcosm, and knowledge of the latter is the mother-knowledge or master-key that unlocks the steel portals of all knowledge ; physical, mental or intellectual and spiritual with the grace of the Master. The ancients rightly put before man the great question : "What is that wisdom or knowledge by knowing which all else becomes known ?" and in the same breath

replied : *Self-knowledge* or *Atamvidya.* Know thyself or *Gnothi Seauton* or *Nosce Teipsum* has always been advocated by the ancient Greeks and the Latins as the highest type of knowledge. It is also termed *Paravidya* or the knowledge of the Beyond—something that lies beyond the grasp of gross senses and the intellect, as inner science of the soul.

Apparently, a person is endowed with five sense faculties : sight, hearing, palate, smell and touch. Of all these the faculty of sight is the most important. Eyes are therefore rightly spoken of as '*windows of the soul.*' Eyes do reveal the inner state of the mind—whatever it be, of peace and tranquility or of anger and unrest. It is through the power of the eyes that a mesmerist or a hypnotist controls his medium. Some reptiles, too, transfix and paralyze their prey making it immobile by casting their strong gaze on it. So is the case with an osprey or the fishing eagle. The wizard and the enchanter works his black art through the eyes. The mother transmits her love to a baby through her eyes. Even the domestic animals find comfort from the loving gaze of their master. Poets sing of the laughing eyes, sparkling eyes, liquid eyes, languishing eyes, drilling eyes, speaking eyes and so on. The silent language of the eyes is wonderful indeed. Words fail to express the expressiveness of the

eyes. With no words, the eyes are still eloquent. Their silent speech and their appeal are universally acknowleged and go to the very heart.

In a state of wakeful consciousness, the seat of both the mind and spirit is located behind the center of the two eyebrows. In the dream state of semi-consciousness, this seat is transferred to the place of the thyroid gland in the throat and in the state of deep slumber or *sushupti* (unconscious state), it goes still further down to the navel. Since the Path of the Saints (the science of the spirit) deals with a state of super-consciousness, the real search begins from the third eye or *Nukta-i-Sweda* or *Divya Chakshu* and goes upwards (and not downwards) from stage to stage, until *Sachkhand* or *Muqam-i-Haq* or True Home of our Father is reached.

This body is the temple of God. The Kingdom of God is within us. The whole of macrocosm is said to be locked up in the microcosm. The true knowledge of the former can only be had with the knowledge of the latter. "*A tap inside*" is the wonderful dictum of the American philospher Emerson. Both the macrocosm and microcosm have been divided into four planes : (i) *Pind* or the physical body, (ii) *And* (mental or astral body), (iii) *Brahmand* (causal or seed body) and (iv) *Sachkhand* (the Eternal abode of Truth or Soul). All the planes below Sachkhand

are liable to destruction at the time of dissolution or grand-dissolution, as the case may be. The idyllic home of the saints and the Master-souls is located in Sachkhand ; and realisation of this plane is their ideal. From Sachkhand to Pind the reflection of the six centers in each of the above planes may be seen in the corresponding centres of the lower plane, just in the same way as reflection of the sun may be seen in a number of pitchers full of water and again of the latter in turn on a wall nearby. The six ganglionic centers of the body are (i) *guda* (rectum), (ii) *indri* (procreatory organ), (iii) *nabhi* (navel), (iv) *hirdey* (heart), (v) *kanth* (throat or thyroid), (vi) *aggya* (behind the eyes).

The yogis, after Hatha Yogic exercises of *dhoti, neti* and *basti,* etc. first purify the physical body and then by constant practice, involving *pranas* gradually pierce through the various gangalionic centres described above. They thus come up to *aggya chakar* behind the eyes—the whole process beginning from *guda chakar* or rectum center, and passing through the spinal chord by means of *Kundalini* Yoga or the serpentine power. This type of yoga is very arduous and is beset with difficulties and dangers. In it the pranas or the vital airs are to be controlled, regulated and directed properly which is not easily done and specially for an average householder aspirant to achieve it successfully is

very difficult and time-consuming. The saints do not recommend it in this age, when, physically, people are not fit to undertake this type of yoga. They altogether ignore the reflexes in the *Pind* or the body; and start right from the aggya chakar at the union of *Pind* and *And*. This very centre is the seat of the soul in a state of wakeful consciousness. They enjoin mental Simran, with undivided attention and loving devotion, of the electrified or highly magnetized and charged names of God given by them. By use of these words, one forgets the world around him, nay his environments, and his very body, with the result that all his sensory currents are concentrated and focussed on the Divine-ground which lights up, becoming all aflame.

Saint Matthew, in the Gospel, refers to this state in the following words: "The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

—Matt. VI : 22

Sant Tulsi Sahib also pertinently remarks in this context: "In the pupil of the eyes there is a hollow center called *Til* and in that center lies the entire secret of spirituality, which thou canst find, if thou were to peep inside—behind the steel curtain of darkness."

Hazrat Moeen-ud-Din-Chisti, a Muslim saint of higher order, says; "Open thy inner eye so

that thou witnesseth the glory of God. Close thy ears and thy mouth and become just all Eye so as to behold His glory."

The eyes, as said before, are truly the windows of the soul—opening casements of fairylands of old. Swamiji says: "These eyes are windows that open unto you the abode of God."

Guru Nanak too speaks of them as: "In the palace of the soul (human body) there are two windows through which peep Lord *Shiva* and His consort *Shakti* (Parbati). Just open the eyes and see the blessed God within."

Sant Kabir also says: "If thou were to intune thine eyes into one centre, a wonderful sight shall meet thy gaze."

The light of the two eyes passing through the optic nerves meets at a point called third eye (*Tisra Til, Shiv Netar* or *Nuqta-i-Sweda*) which too is lighted up with a light which is shadowless and uncreate. From here the spirit enters the *Sukhmana* or *Shahrag*, lying between *Ida* and *Pingla* and hears the Sound of celestial strains (or the Sound-current) which is the very life of the universe. This process is instrumental in sustaining and guiding the spirit on its onward journey.

"Listen ye to the holy melody in the Sukhman
by attuning your attention in the deep silence,
By attending to the ineffable music of the soul
ye shall be rid of all desires and longings."

—Malar War M.1

"In this age pay heed to the inner Music,
By devotion to this, ye shall be freed from all pride." —Asa M.3

As the spirit transcends the physical plane, It has to pass through various realms characterized by stars, the sun and the moon, when it is greeted by the luminous form of the Master, who, from here, takes charge of the spirit, and It travels ahead, led on by the Sound-current to reach the True Home of our Father. The path of the saints is neither a religion nor a creed. Whosoever, whether a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian, reaches the abode of bliss or Truth is termed a saint. Everywhere there are two types of Faqirs or orders of holy men of piety:

(1) Those who belong to the lower order or *Darja-i-sifli*. They remain attached to ganglionic centers of the Pind or the physical body, as the yogis do.

(2) Those of the higher order or *Darja-i-Ulvi*. Their *sadhan* or spiritual discipline begins with the *aggya chakar*, behind the eyes.

Some of tne Muslim Faqirs belonged to the higher order. Hazrat Ibrahim says that he came across the Great Star and passed on his onward journey. Guru Nanak also refers to this Inner Star, which the Master in His grace might show to the aspirants.

"A bright star appearing on the horizon comes to view through God's grace,

A devotee with a good fortune may see it with
the Master's Word. —Tokhari M.I

The wise men of the East also followed a Bright Star which led them to Bethlehem and brought them to Christ. Tulsi Sahib also speaks of the Brilliant Star that meets the spirit at the threshold of *Gaggan* or entrance to the astral plane. Hazrat Mohammed tells us that he did *Shak-ul-Qamar* (struck the moon in twain) which is significant enough and figuratively connotes that a soul went beyond this realm of the moon. Everyone who makes a journey to the spiritual realms has of course to do this *Shak-ul-Qamar* by passing through the moon.

Great is man. He has in him a drop of the Divine Consciousness like everything else in the creation. Though apparently he looks like a puny child of clay, yet he has untold possibilities hidden in him. He was made by God after His own image. He has the latent spiritual treasures, buried in the depth of his mind. If he has a grain of faith in his powers, he can, as affirmed by Christ, move mighty mountains off their base, and may command the winds and the waters as great souls did in every age. Thought force is the motor power behind all our acts. The very world is the result of His Will. God commanded : "Let there be light and there was light." At His bidding the various elements sprang into motion and completed the work of creation.

The spirit, a spark from the Divine Fire, is also great and has similar possibilities within its scope. Unfortunately its power is frittered away through mind and outgoing faculties. The rays of sun do not burn anyone, but if these are passed through a convex lens, they converge at one centre and set the things on the other side on fire. So the spirit when mind-driven identifies itself with the bodily senses. It never thinks that It is apart from them, and is in fact the ruler and governor of the universe.

It is the great activating force and dynamic power behind all our thoughts, words and deeds. Even the heavenly bodies like the stars, the moon and the sun move with its motion. All energy, physical or metaphysical, mechanical or electrical, magnetic or gravitational; atomic and nuclear, are the partial manifestations of this Primal energy of God : creating, destroying and recreating endless systems and universes in the twinkling of an eye. But unluckily we do not realise this invisible power and are concerned only with its working and do not see the hidden hand behind the puppet-show of the world. We are trying all the while to understand the phenomenon of shadow and the shadowy things but know next to nothing of noumenon. The spirit has thus completely and tragically forgotten its Godhood, its Divine origin and latent Divinity which needs awakening

for coming into its own, before it can work wonders and perform miracles like the Master-souls. Ignorance is the root cause of this deplorable state of things. Many do not know that "life spirit is more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment", as Christ used to say.

It behoves man to turn aside from worldly enjoyments so that he may be blessed with heavenly gifts. Like the beautiful Joseph driven in the well, by his brethren, spirit has fallen into the well of the body with mind and senses and is in a helpless state. We can climb up if we could take hold of the wonderful rope-ladder provided by the Father, God, within each one of us. It is the Sound-current that can pull us up out of the blind and abysmal depths into the kindly light of God and lead us into the manifold spiritual worlds which are invisible to us at present.

The physical eyes can only see physical things and both of them are subject to decay and death. But if our inner-eye could be opened, we will be able to see immortal and imperishable planes. "An animal with his head downwards may well think of eating and drinking all the time, but fie on man with his head erect, if he were not to look upward," (Shamas-tabrez). So long a person does not rise above the sensual world, he remains ignorant of the high heavens meant for his blessedness.

"So long a spirit does not rise above the body-
consciousness,
It remains a stranger to the spiritual realms
beyond." —Maulana Rumi

Once a spirit transcends the physical realm, it inherits as its birthright the spiritual kingdom —for the Kingdom of God lies within.

"If you would not leave the caravansarai of the
body,
How can you reach the true Home of your
Beloved ?" —Hafiz Shirazi

This transcension of the spirit from the senses is technically known in *Sant-Mat* as death in life (self-naughting) and in the Vedantic terminology as self-analysis. Christ calls it *second birth or birth anew,* and Muslims term it as *"dying before death."* This immersion in God is true resurrection or coming into new life. It is possible only through accepting the Path of any Master-soul—which is none other than that of the Sound-current.

The Master dwells amongst us as Word Personified or as the Gospels tell us of Christ that "the Word was made flesh and dwealt amongst us." He by transmitting his own life-impulse temporarily raises us above the body consciousness and grants us a direct inner experience of the light-cum-sound principle, which by a regular practice from day to day can be developed to any length one may like.

This gradually leads the spirit from physical to astral or mental plane, then to causal or seed plane and so on to the purely spiritual plane—Sachkhand—The True Home of our Father.

When ultimately the soul at its journey's end reaches the True Home of the Father and sees the splendour of Godhood in the ineffable resplendent light, one begins to see God in everything in the Universe. When Christ and Buddha rose above the body consciousness, they referred to the Way, as leading to the Kingdom of God and the *Nirvana pad* respectively. The Muslims call it as *Muqam-i-Haq* and the Christians New Jerusalem. Thereafter Christ used to say: "Behold the Lord" and Guru Nanak would exclaim: "The Lord of Nanak is visible everywhere." The Sage of Dakshneshwar, Sri Rama Krishna Parmhans, when questioned by young Naren, as Swami Vivekananda was then known, whether he had seen God, replied: "Yes, my child, I have seen Him as clearly as I see you, nay more than that."

"Lord of Nanak in His fullness is present in all things and everywhere." —Suhi M.5

"The Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Inaccessible, manifests itself in full effulgence to the true devotee." —Sri Rag M.4

"God of Nanak is immanent in all forms and colours whether visible or invisible."

—Suhi M.4

Great is God who is absolute, imageless, indescribable and peerless. He is neither sound nor light. In Himself, He is what He is, but in common parlance has to be expressed in words of limited import and coming out of the limited source of the finite intellect.

"God, the Infinite, of course has to be described
in finite terms,
How can I know what He is ? —Sorath M.5

The Absolute Power when it came into being and became God-in-expression, there was vibration, which gave rise to Light and Sound principles, called by all saints as Light and *Udgit*. God Absolute cannot be seen or heard for nobody has seen God so far. God into expression, by way of Light and Sound Principles can, however, be seen and heard. This can be experienced by the spirit through inner vision and inner audition only which open when you rise above the body consciousness. The saints also call the Absolute and the God-in-expression by the name of *Mahadayal* and *Dayal* respectively. This Sound-current is responsible for the various creations, the spiritual planes and all the realms in varying degrees and orders. This Sound-current descends making pure spiritual, spirituo-material, materio- spiritual and material planes, last three of which dissolve in the grand dissolution and dissolution. Each of these planes has its individual presiding deities : *Jot Niranjan*, for

example, is the Lord of *And*, the subtle or mental plane, and is the creator of the material and physical universe which is next below in the hierarchy. *Onkar* is the Lord of the Causal or Seed region and the creator of the lower region of *And* or subtle universe. Other deities preside over other planes, in the ascending order of the system of creation. All of them of course derive their authority from *Sat-purush* or *Sat Naam* or *Dayal* or *Ekankar*.

The spirit as It withdraws from the body, proceeds by degrees from one plane to another, until It reaches *Sat-Naam* or *Haq*. From what has been said, it should be clear that so far the spirit is an entity quite apart from *Sat-Naam*. The Over-Lord of them all is called *Khasum* (Lord of all), *Swami, Hari Rai, Maha-Dayal*, or *Nirala*, unique in Himself and indescribable. The spirit gets merged in Him just as a drop of water loses itself in the ocean or a ray of light in the sun.

"As water mingles with the water,
So doth light merge in the light." —Gauri M.5

"As a ray of light gets absorbed in the sun and
 a drop in the ocean,
So doth the light of spirit in the Great Light."
—Bilawal M.5

This state baffles all description. The Muslim saints declare this condition as "*Hairat, Hairat*" and the Hindus as "*Aschraj, Aschraj*" and

the Sikhs as "*Waho, Waho*" all of which are expressions of wonder. The teachings of most of the saints amongst Hindus and Muslims refer as far as *Brahm*. Very rarely do we find in them refrences to *Parbrahm*. The Masters have as their ideal something far beyond the latter—a stage safely beyond the sway of dissolution and grand-dissolution.

Experience of Ideal Religion: An Inner achievement

For the unitive experiment of soul with Oversoul, one has to enter into the laboratory of the human body, just as a student of science enters the science-room for a scientific experiment and closes all the doors and windows, so that the noise and stir from outside may not disturb him in his work. Again, on the table before him are arranged various articles and instruments, all neat and clean for handling before he, under the guidance and instructions of the science-master, starts making the experiment. He moves with a single-minded purpose, a well pointed attention and a whole-hearted devotion. He may fail once or twice but he does not loses heart in his endeavours and repeats the process over and over again until he succeeds. In exactly the same way, the spiritual experiment is to be carried on in the human body after closing down all the physical senses, so as to keep off the noise and bustle of the world.

This process of going-in, consists in withdrawal of the sensory currents and focussing them at the seat of the soul or consciousness at a center behind the two eyebrows. In other words, the spirit which at present is pervading the entire body from top to toe and is identified with the world is gathered up and collected at one place until one loses the very idea of having a body at all. Having closed down all the outlets of attention, the spiritual experiment is now to be started in the presence of the Master-soul and under His guidance and instructions, the whole process is to be gone through with scrupulous attention and loving devotion.

Then you are no longer a physical entity but a pure spirit. So also is the luminous from of the Master—Sound Personified—Naam Shabd Sruti, Naad, Hidden Music or call it what you will. To link the spirit with it can only be done when the mind is freed from mental oscillations and the intellect is at perfect rest, so that a Halcyon calm is established both within and without.

Mere washing of the body can be of little avail. Inner cleanlines must precede outer cleanliness. The mind must first be cleansed and purified of all desires, anger, hankering, attachment and egotism before you start with the spiritual experiment.

"By washing outside, without washing the mind
within one loses both here and hereafter,
Ever tormented by lust and anger he is lost and
bewildered." —Asa M.5

Prophet Mohammed too laid great emphasis on the purity of the mind. He used to say that *Namaz* (prayer) was the key to *Jannat* (Paradise) and the purity of heart was the key to *Namaz*, and again that chastity was more than half-way house on the Path Godwards.

St. Matthew tells us:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

But inner cleanliness cannot come by washing the body alone. The bodily dirt can, of course, be washed off by water, the pollution can be cleansed by means of soap but the sinful mind is cleansed by communion with the Word. Guru Nanak therefore tells us:

"When the limbs of the body are besmeared,
they are washed clean with water;
When the clothes get dirty and polluted, they
are cleansed by soap;
When one's mind gets defiled by sins, it can be
purified only by communion with the Word.
—Jap Ji, St. 20

We can commune with and practice the Word by linking the inner consciousness with the Sound-principle but for this, one has, in the first instance, to subdue the mind and the senses.

"He who can control the ten senses, he may see
the light of heaven." —Gauri M.5

The spirit which alone is to make the experiment can do nothing when it is altogether lost in the stormy seas of passions. It is tossed on the billows like a leaky boat with no rudder to guide its course and is driven helplessly by the chance winds and waters around it.

Unless one gets an actual experience of the self and of God, one cannot believe and have unshakable faith in the existence of God. The saints and Master-souls do in fact transcend the limitations of the three bodies ; physical, astral and causal and really get the experience of and a contact with the Really within. As such they are competent enough to guide mankind on the Highroad to God, for they do speak from actual experience and not from hearsay or secondary knowledge gathered from ancient texts or through learned priests and pandits.

"Listen ye to the true testimony of saints,
They give out what they actually witness "

—Ramkali M.5

Again, such Godmen never ask a person to have just a blind faith in their teachings. On the contrary their clarion call is : "Believe not the word of a Master-saint, unless thou hast an actual experience of what he saith."

"Until I see the Truth with my own eyes,
I cannot be fully convinced of what the Master
says." —Swami ji

"When I saw (the Truth) with my own eyes,
Then in truth I put faith in the Master's words.
—Tulsi Sahib

The Master-souls believe in the direct testimony of the experiencing spirit. They, like Rishi Ashta Vakar, are capable of delivering goods right now and here. The Masters do not hold out empty promises which may or may not come true, nor give false hopes which may or may not materialize. Their religion is one of sterling gold at the counter and not one of mere credit. Why then, should one engage in observance of rites and rituals and performance of meritorious deeds in the hope of securing some posthumous and uncertain rewards? Human birth is too precious and human life, alas, too brief to be frittered away in useless pursuits that may bear no fruit in the long run.

Right target:

To escape from sorrow and suffering and to achieve supreme and everlasting bliss, everyone makes a headlong dash but achieves nothing. A wise man is one who always makes a sincere effort in the right direction and never loses sight of his objective or ideal. In the absence of a definite goal and a target, one aimlessly and endlessly wanders in utter darkness. On the other hand a clear-cut destination serves as a beacon-light that guides at every step, and each stride takes the weary traveller nearer to the journey's end.

Mere effort without well-directed attention focussed on the object of quest cannot lead a person anywhere. Object and effort must therefore be in one straight line before there can be hope of success. A life of all effort with one's back to the objective, will surely achieve nothing.

"A search for a thing in the wrong direction
can never be fruitful." —Kabir

It would just mean blindfolded and endless gyrations like those of an ox yoked to the oil press, for he moves all the day long with blinkers on his eyes. He actually does not get out of the vicious circle and so makes no progress whatsoever.

In the world, wheresoever one may turn his eyes, one sees nothing but universal strife and unrest, creatures feeding upon creatures, and endless struggle for survival. All this plethoric confusion is indeed born from ignorance or lack of knowledge of the end or whereto. Human life, like any other kind of life, has its own El Dorado; of which one can learn from the very Book of Life itself. All the sacred texts and all knowledge of the world is nothing but the result of unfoldment of the spirit at the intellectual centres within the human body. All inspirations come from the soul within, the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Wonderful indeed is the house in which we live. God,

even to-day, as of old, reveals Himself to the human soul provided it is neat, clean and receptive. This body is a veritable temple of God in which the spirit of man and the spirit of God both live together, or else this body were a carcass fit to be consigned to the flames or to the graveyard.

Shamas Tabriz, a great Muslim saint of repute says: "By the side of this grass blade of the human body, there flows an endless stream of life. Hidden in the heart of this atom is the light of a hundred suns." But alas! it is not given to man to know the mysteries of life without the aid of a Master-soul. The entire macrocosm lies buried in the microcosm. One has to dig deep within to get at the untold treasures of spirituality at the roots of the soul. One who wanders without in search of God, is but a sceptic and a heretic and knows not the real Truth.

"Everything is in the body and nothing without it,
He who seeks without wanders in delusion."

—Majh M.5

Path of the Masters: The only true religion—Para-vidya or knowledge of the Beyond:

A person may have a short or a long vision. One may look right under one's nose and another may be able to penetrate into the far off heavenly regions. There is a world of difference

between these two. We should, therefore, seek out a person fully established in Godhood or Divinity and who is a conscious co-worker with God. Then we may be able to know and understand from Him, God's ways and have access to an actual experience of God-realisation.

God-knowledge is an inner science of the soul, and hence is known as *Paravidya* or the knowledge of the Beyond as contradistinguished from *Apravidya* or experience and knowledge on the level of the senses. All scientific knowledge with its vast scope, unlimited extent and untold possibilities is after all, a knowledge of the physical, material world, and does not constitute roots of knowledge. It tells us only of the material creation and provides food for the intellect, while *Paravidya* is concerned with the Creator or the Reality behind the creation and provides food for the soul or spirit. *Apravidya* deals with the objects within the range of the human senses, the laws governing their growth and how the same can be conquered and pressed into service for the benefit of mankind. *Paravidya* deals with the active life-principle which works in the creation and through which we feel the life-impulse in all animated creation. One may know a lot about the world and yet be altogether ignorant of the fundamental and basic life-principle working within him which is the very life of his life and the very soul of his soul.

Self-knowledge then is the key that solves all the problems of life. The knowledge of the world is of little avail, if we know not what we are. Learning and knowledge do sharpen the intellect and expand the field of its activity, coextensive with the creation itself (should it be possible), but the more one may express himself outwardly, the farther he is removed from the ideal of real life—the life of spirit.

Bu Ali Qalander says: "All that we see is a great optical delusion, a mere chimera and a mirage with no actual existence. All that we know is stark ignorance."

Swami Ji says: "A man of intuition and realisation is an adept in the inner science while a merely learned person is just an ignorant fool groaning under the dead-weight of books."

Science may tell us of physical objects and their inter-relations, but it is totally ignorant of the creative power behind them. The goal of life does not consist in mere book knowledge and book learning but consists in knowing the life-principle that is working in the entire creation: the Word, the *Kalma* or the *Naam*, whatever name we may like to give it. According to Master-souls, real knowledge finds its efflorescence and fulfilment in contacting the Sound-current, *Shabd* or *Naad* and not merely in the reading of scriptures or other books.

The science of the Masters is purely an inner science and has continued as such from times

immemorial. It is called *Para Vidya,* which is knowledge self-existent and not dependent upon any other knowledge. It is the most ancient, the most natural and the most perfect science but cannot be had from books alone. The scriptures have no doubt made an attempt to deal with the spiritual science at some length, but all such efforts have proved abortive, since Reality, infinite as It is, could not be confined in the dead and dry leaves, nor is there any model outside with which it can be compared. Moreover the writers with finite words and the limited intellect have no means to describe it adequately.

The Master-souls have always advised meticulous abstention from learned disputations or philosophic polemics, as Reality lies far beyond the range of senses, the human mind and the human intellect. Indulging in the intellectual pursuits does not change one's life. They emphatically enjoin and ordain : "Be the doer of the Word and not the hearer alone." Their teachings are ready cash and do not admit of credit bargains. It is a practical science and not a mere theoretical reasoning. One must learn the theory first and then says goodbye to one's logic and then do and see what he gains.

"The secret of success lies in practicing the discipline and not in reasoning and arguments,

Leave off all discussions and dissertations and do the thing and take the Reality." —Swami Ji

In Mandyuk Upnishad it is said that once a person, Shounack by name, went to the sage Bhardwaj and questioned: "Master, tell me of the knowledge that may make one Omniscient or all-knowing." The sage replied: O Shounack! the knowers of *Brahm* tell us that in the world there are two types of knowledge; *Apravidya* and *Paravidya*. The former consists in the study of Vedas and other scriptures and all kinds of physical sciences, like astronomy, grammer, etcetra, but it does not bring one face to face with *Brahm*. The latter—*Paravidya*—is knowledge of the Beyond, with which *Brahm*, the Unchangeable *Akshar*, is found. It is a practical subject and deals with self-knowledge and God knowledge both of which lie beyond the pale of senses, mind, intellect. It can be realised by pure *Atman* or spirit only after it has, by right contemplation, right concentration and right meditation, freed itself by peeling off layer by layer the various *koshas* or coverings enshrouding it and has actually transcended the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies. While the one is purely a bookish knowledge of the world, the other is a science of inversion or withdrawal of the spirit from the world and worldly objects and relations and this is the root of all knowledge."

Apravidya (or Knowledge of the world) : Its value

The scriptures are indeed wonderful and precious records of the personal experiences of the great souls in their quest of Reality, and as such are worthy of respect and adoration. The study of the scriptures has its own value. To a certain extent these books awaken in us a desire for knowledge of God. By reading them, we too are moved to experiment in the science of life, to seek out some living Master competent to initiate us into the preliminaries of this science, for such a one can help and guide us on the spiritual Path from plane to plane. But beyond this, the scriptures cannot help.

The real help comes from a living Master alone, who makes us repeat the experiment of old. For our satisfaction, he refers us to the recorded results and conclusions for a general check up with our own. Again, it is the living Master who can correctly interpret to us the ancient texts and impart to us the right import. Linked as he is with the Powerhouse or Reality, his utterances are those of God Himself, no matter if the words may appear to be coming out from a human mouth.

"His words are the words of Allah (God) though seemingly these come from Abdullah (the Servant of God)."

Guru Nanak says : "O Lalo, I open my mouth just to utter words that come to me from my

Beloved (God)." Such words of Divine Wisdom coming directly from God-men are more precious than the most precious gems recorded in the holy books. All these have no other value except that of creating in us a desire to know God but cannot actually help us to introvert, to tap within, to withdraw and recede back and be linked with *Word, Naam,* or *Kalma*. "But unfortunately the people of the world get entangled in the books, wholly and solely depend upon them as their mainstay in life, without attempting to do what the books say: "Get attuned with God." In this way one gets entangled in the world, and tied to the scriptures, he finds no bliss. *Srutis* and Puranas all speak of the Way. But instead of freedom, he sinks deeper in the morass." —(Ramayana by Tulsi Das)

A living Master, on the other hand, points to us a "*Way-out*" and puts us on the "*grand trunk road*" leading to the Infinite. He becomes a guide to the weary soul torn by life's struggles in the world, a work which no book can possibly do.

Man is the most ancient of all sentient creatures on earth. All religions and all sacred texts came into being only after his advent. All religions were made for the benefit of man and man was never intended for any religion. God made man and man made religions. Man is the author of all scriptures, but the grand mystery

of life which the latter describe, ever lies within the human breast, and no one can know and solve it unless some Master-soul points the '*Way-In*' and helps the soul to withdraw and transcend all limitations: physical, astral and causal, before it is enabled to have a peep within and listen to the inner Divine Music.

Man is ever engaged in the recitation of scriptures and in expounding the sacred texts to huge congregations, but the pity of it is that he remains all the time far from the Reality that he preaches to others, studies for himself and makes so much noise about.

"He studies the sacred texts for the sake of disputations without knowing the Reality,
And Reality cannot be known but through a Master-soul who gives the true Way to the True One." —Maru M.I

There is a vital difference between man and scriptures. The former is a sentient being, endowed with consciousness and reason and is aware of the same; while the latter are insentient and don't know that they are inert and lifeless and cannot impart correct knowledge without a true interpreter. How can the sacred books speak to, reason with, and try to convince a living entity. With his book-knowledge and learning every person feels that he knows of the Reality, little realising that the Infinite cannot be comprehended by finite means.

His power can be felt by the spirit alone if properly attuned and adjusted under the guidance and instructions of some living Master-soul.

As long as we do not have an inner experience of the soul, we remain in utter darkness. Bookish knowledge becomes a headache as it draws and drags the mind out into the world through the senses and makes us feel identical with them by constant association with the world and by always thinking in terms of body and bodily relations around us. On the contrary, self-knowledge satisfies the innate craving and hunger of the soul for peace and happiness. All that we need learn is the Book of Man, for the greatest study of man is man.

When once a person is able to open the pages of the mind, and sees the great and immense possibilities lying hidden therein, there dawns in him a kind of new awakening and new light, shadowless and uncreate. This is called regeneration or rebirth or resurrection. It puts an end to his otherwise endless sufferings, tribulations, wants and miseries and he gets established in his native Godhood and Divinity. The soul thus freed from worldly ties comes into Its own, knows Its truly Divine nature and tries to understand and find Its source and fountainhead, the Great Ocean of Consciousness : comprising the three vital elements of life, light and love. Attaining this Supreme

Truth, there comes to the soul eternal bliss and and perfect calm forever. But all this process of spiritual evolution blossoming into the Universal Consciousness comes only through the grace of some God-man and not otherwise. That is the fundamental law since the dawn of creation and admits of no modification. Just as there is one God and one Reality, there is also one Path leading to Him—the Path of the Masters. This is nothing else but *Surat Shabd Yoga* or Yoga of the Sound-current. A Muslim saint, therefore, says :

"Consign all thy books to the flames and by constant remembrance of the Lord, transform thy mind into a veritable garden of Allah (God.)"

The Vedas and Upnishads tell that *Atma Sidhi* or Self-realisation cannot be attained by the study of or listening to the scriptures, as Self lies far beyond the scope of both the mind and the intellect. It can be achieved by intuition, an integral experience of the soul, through the grace of some Master-soul.

In verse 39 of Sukat 164 of Mandal I of Rig Veda and in verse 8 of Chapter IV of Shwetarshweta Upnishad, it is stated that a person who does not know the Primal Causeless Cause, Self-existent and Immanent, which is the very soul of the Vedas and in whom all gods and godesses are deeply rooted, will not have anything to do

with the Vedas. Those alone have real peace who are engrafted to Him.

Even if a person were to be well-versed in the four Vedas, eighteen Puranas, nine Viyakaranas, and six Shastras (six Schools of Indian Philosophy) and all other sacred scriptures of the world, he is lost in the mumble and jumble of the scriptures and remains as far removed from God as ever before. So long as the human soul does not come in contact with *Shabd* or *Word* (God in action), it wanders in the world like a *Chandool* (parrot), who on the spur of the moment begins imitating whatever it hears.

All philosophic disputations are the offspring of dull and drab intellect and the source of headache. It would certainly be better, by far, if one were to leave off all knowledge and learning and grasp the one and the only pivotal still point—Reality—the bestower of all bliss and happiness. Bulleh Shah and Guru Nanak and others also speak in the same terms.

"Why do ye bother with so many books for these are a source of headache,
Learn ye the mystery of the Centre and leave of the vicious circle of endless and idle talk."

—Bulleh Shah

"One may read cart-loads of books and carry a heavy load on his head,
All the studies forge but strong fetters and keep one bound therein.

One may read endlessly from year to year, and month to month, nay every moment of his, life,
O Nanak ! only one thing counts and all the rest but make one self-conceited."

—Asa War M.1

"The study of the scriptures including the Vedas, far from freeing the mind of shackles makes one all the more ego-centric."

—Sorath M.5

Hafiz, a well-known Persian poet, goes to the extent of saying that so long as a person does not leave intellectual wrangling, he remains ignorant of the Reality. Man must take note of one thing—that he must transcend himself if he wants to escape from all limitations and shortcomings.

If any problem has to be solved, one must apply himself heart and soul to its solution. Upnishadas with a clarion call declare that *Atamvidya* or self-knowledge dawns only when the senses are at rest, the mind is stilled and the intellect too is equipoised. Learning and knowledge may be an additional asset for a spiritual person but certainly constitute a crown of thorns for the worldly wise.

"Knowledge may adorn a spiritual adept,
But it is a headache for the carnal mind."

—Maulana Rumi

In Brihadaraniak Upanishad it is mentioned that an unlettered person is steeped in dark

ignorance and a learned one is in still greater darkness. Why? Because a man of great learning can hardly know the glory and greatness of the saints and their saintly teachings.

The saints and sages therefore lay stress on life of spirituality. Book-learning has no real value for them. The hearsay words of wisdom and knowledge derived from books are all lifeless and as such cannot transmit life-impulse to others. It is just like talking of sweets and not partaking of the same. Should a person go on repeating the word '*pudding*' for a century or even keep meditating on the various ingredients that go to make a pudding, he cannot relish the pudding nor can he have any satiation unless he actually eats it.

Bhai Gurdas says the same thing, in this context :—

"By repeating the word 'sugar', one tastes not the sweetness of sugar,
By repeating the word 'fire', one is not rid of the cold,
By repeating the word 'physician', one is not cured of the malady,
By repeating the word 'suffering', one never escapes therefrom,
By repeating the word 'sandal', one never enjoys its fragrance,
By repeating the word 'moon', one never gets its soothing light,

By repeating the word 'jnana', one never gets out of ignorance,
It is only the actual practice that brings in Heaven's light." —Kabit Sawai 452

Path of the Masters : Its three fundamentals

Success in spiritually depends on three factors :

(i) Satsang (spiritual congregation)
(ii) Satguru (living Master-soul).
(iii) Sat-Naam or Shabd (Word).

(i) SATSANG. The term is comprised of two words : *Sat* meaning God—the Unchangeable Permanence, and *Sang* denoting union. It stands for contact with God. It can be had by the soul only when it shakes off all the trappings, physical, astral and causal. It also means an association with a living Master-soul who is an embodiment of the awakened life-principle in Him. *Sat* or life in its fullness is manifest in him. He teaches nothing but spirituality which is the source of all life and without which people lead merely a maimed and mutilated existence on the plane of senses. He tells us that besides senses, mind and intellect, there is yet another power, greater than all these, for it quickens them with life, namely, the spirit or soul. It is in fact the only motor power in the body and the pity of it is that we are altogether ignorant of it and have never even given a thought to it. It is the problem of problems, the most important and vital and yet the most ignored. An

association with a saint, a sage or a Master-soul will directly dye an aspirant in the colours of spirituality in just the same way as proximity to fire gives warmth and nearness to ice cold. The fact is that "God does not live on the highest heaven nor in the depths of the earth for no space is sufficient to contain Him. But he truly resides in the bosom of a Godman."

(Maulana Rumi)

"My mind like a bird flew heavenwards,
The paradise was all deserted as the Lord resides
with His saints." —Kabir

It may be said that such a person is as much a Polarized God as an electric switch is a polarised powerhouse or a bathing sea-beach which is a safe place where one can have a comfortable dip in waters of the sea. The true criterion of such a Satsang is that talks delivered there are always confined to spirit, its nature, its place and value in human life, its perennial source and how to gain the same. He thus shows how to escape from sufferings, decay and death which are rampant in the world and to which all living creatures are subject.

Satsang is of two types: Outer and Inner

Outer Satsang: It is Satsang without. It denotes company of a Master-soul, attending to the discourses and talks on spirituality wherein he describes *Atma Sadhan* or spiritual discipline and in an inimitably loving way all peculiar

to Him, exhorts the aspirants to devote some time for *Atma Sidhi* or self-realisation. It is the first and the last essential for God-realisation. This part of his work may for the sake of convenience be termed theory of spiritual science.

"In a gathering like this one gets a true clue to God,
For verily God shines therein through the God-Man." —Majh M.4

"In a spiritual congregation one hears of nothing but Naam,
And Naam alone is discussed therein in all its varied aspects." —Sri Rag. M.1

"No congregation can be termed a satsang
Unless it is presided over by a Master-Soul."
—Maru M.3

Inner Satsang: This is Satsang within. It consists in entering the laboratory of the human body according to the instructions of the Master, withdrawing the sensory currents from the body, by means of *Simran, Dhayan* (remembrance and concentration) and finally in linking she soul with the *Dhun* the eternal Sound current in the body through *Bhajjan* (attuning) the direct link between the individual soul and Over-soul. The soul thus attains by degrees *Moksha* or liberation from sufferings, decay and death—the most deadly foes of all mortals. This part of

his mission may be termed *Surat Shabd Yoga* and it constitutes the practice in spiritual science.

(ii) SATGURU: Sant or Satguru is the living embodiment of God, for Life, Light and Love—the three attributes of Godhood—are fully present in him. He is charged through and through with *Sat* or true life, true light and true love. He is fountainhead of Godhood and love and is competent to lead all the aspirants God-ward. He is a true guide on the grand road of spirituality. He is a God-man. The contact with God can be established only through His grace, for no one else can do this. The scriptures may tell us a lot about spirituality for they constitute a wonderful storehouse of recorded spiritual experiences of ancient sages and seers. But they cannot give us a living touch and an actual experience of spirituality, which may be caught like an infection from the love-laden eyes of a person infected with spirituality. Just as a lighted candle can light the unlighted candles so also spiritual life-impulse can be transmitted by a spiritually living person.

"He alone lives who is in touch with God
within,
O Nanak ! all the rest are really dead."

—Majh War M.I

A God-man is truly the mouthpiece of God. God speaks through saints and seers and reveals Himself through His prophets. The nearness

of a living Master is the greatest blessing that one can have. A loving gaze, a kind word from Him is enough to unlock a thrill of Divine happiness in any human soul. He may at any moment open the floodgates of spirituality and overwhelm a shrivelled soul with the waters of life. He is the bread of life and the water of life and whosoever partakes of it, enjoys everlasting life and ever after walks in the Light of God. Christ says:

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

—John 3-14

"I am the Light of the world, and he that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of life." —John 8-12

But much depends on the simplicity and sincerity of the seeker, his loving devotion and faith and, above all, his receptivity, for he who comes brimful already cannot possibly take in anything else.

Guru or the God-man is the ideal. His body is just a pole from where the radio-active waves of Godhood make themselves manifest in the world, and are felt by all who come near that Pole.

(iii) SAT-NAAM: It is the original name of God-in-Action, the great and grand motor

power, behind the entire creation. Saint John speaks of it :

"In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not."

The Muslims call it *Kalma* and declare that the 14 *Tabaks* or divisions (into which they consider the universe as divided), were created by it. The Hindus term it *Naad* and ascribe to it, the manifestation of 14 *Bhavans* or regions. The Sikh scriptures call it *Shabd* or *Bani*,* the Upnishads speak of it as *Udgit* and the Vedas give it the name of *Sruti* or *Akash Bani*. The saints refer to it as *Naam* or *Shabd* and there is no place where the vibrations thereof are not felt. This *Naam* or *Sat-Naam* is then the controlling power of the universe. It is the great cementing force whereby various elements, so very divergent in nature are held together in the wonderful mosaic of the many coloured dome of the universe. It is the string of life running through the entire creation and thus the connecting link between the Creator and His creation. Kabir Sahib says :

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*For more detail a reference is invited to the treatise on 'Naam.'

"Ram Naam is the only Reality and anything besides is subject to decay and dissolution. Always meditate and concentrate on this Reality for death knows no calendar and may at home or abroad pounce any moment upon thee with its murderous claws."

"He alone knows of Naam as I would like him to do,
I take hold of him and support him through.
The natural inner music continuously flowing of itself,
But only a rare soul knows of this communion,
The all-pervading spirit surges through every pore of the body,
The true *Simran* consists in perpetual attuning of the soul, with the inner music, without any outer aid (of lips, tongue, throat or the heart).
He who contacts the hidden crest-jewel, is our true friend." —Kabir

"The all-pervading spirit of God saves one from births and deaths.
A communion with the Word ferries one across the sea of life." —Gond M.5

This is the *'Voice of Silence'*, as the theosophists describe it, for it can be heard only in the silence of the soul. The *elan vital* or the vital currents of life can be felt in the inner depths of the mind. It is something subjective and can be experienced and felt only within, through the kindness of some Master-soul.

The path of the Masters : The three practices of methods prescribed

There are three distinct entities in the composition of a person : (i) physical body as made mostly of solid matter, (ii) mental body as made of subtle matter and (iii) causal or the seed body that holds the first two.

The spirit or soul works through all the three bodies. The various bodies, sooner or later, are bound to disintegrate and dissolve ; while the soul is indestructible, an ever-living entity beyond the sway of *Kaal* (time) or death. It is the spark from the Divine Forge at which the Life Current is forged to shape the world and to bring it into being. The body is the veritable temple of God and this microcosm simply works on the lines of the macrocosm.

"Macrocosm is in the microcosm and he who seeks the macrocosm must find it in the microcosm." —Dhanasari Peepa

Truth or *Naam* alone is imperceptibly working both in man and in the universe. God and His spirit are but one in essence. To know God one must first know the self within. Without self-knowledge through self-analysis, the realisation of Oneness within and without does not dawn. The Mohammedan saints also say that *Alam-i-Saghir* (the little world) is a prototype of *Alam-i-Kabir* (the greater world).

Thrice blessed indeed is man. He is the roof and crown of things ! To be a complete

man is the efflorescence of human existence. "Be ye perfect as thy Father in heaven is perfect" is one of the cardinal principles in Christianity. Kabir says that the devotee should be like God himself. This perfection must therefore be three-fold : physical, mental and spiritual. To a certain extent, one has to depend on his own individual effort, but much depends on outer aid. In Nature fruit trees fructify in a much shorter time if they are scientifically fed than if left to themselves. The same principle works with still greater force in the case of sentient and conscious human beings. A person with the help of a Master-soul can more readily, more easily and more quickly, gain spiritual attainments than otherwise. But the association and aid must be sought from a perfect Master, well-versed not only in the theory but also in the practice of the science of spirituality.

Again, an aspirant has to be very particular in the matter of his food, his conduct, his environments, all of which exert a powerful influence on his body and mind. A simple *Satvik* diet, (barring meat, fish, fowl and eggs) abstinence from all intoxicants, idle talk and idle pursuits, a spirit of detachment from the glamour of the world are therefore enjoined as discipline on the spiritual Path. With this background, the *Sadhak* is then initiated into practices that are conducive to his spiritual

welfare: (i) *Simran,* (ii) *Dhyan,* and (iii) *Dhuni Abhyas.*

Our mind at present is engaged in the Simran of the world and worldly objects so much so that we are completely identified with them. We know not if we have a separate existence apart from these things. Howsoever hard we may try to introvert the mind, we cannot do it. The thoughts of friends and relations, of office files and records, of law courts and law books, of medicines and diseases, of profits and losses, of wages and strikes, etc. come up on the mental screen as in a picture house. In order to wean the mind from these, one has to do Simran of God's names and to meditate on something else. The saints therefore enjoin for a *Sadhak* or aspirant, Simran with the tongue of thought and Dhyan with the eye of thought. With these two mental processes, the mind gradually learns to get equipoise and there comes a lull in its ever vacillating tendencies. Lastly, one has to listen to the Voice of Silence with the ears of thought.

Shabd or *Naam* or *Word* is continuously vibrating within each one of us, for we live by It. The soul and Sound-current are one in essence. There is such wonderful music in it that the Hydra-headed serpent of the mind, on hearing it gets altogether docile. The attention (the essence of the spirit), hitherto a slave to

the mind, is attracted, attuned and absorbed in the inner strains of music. It is no longer capable of subserving the mind and the result is that the latter is rendered helpless and falls off as a *carcass*. The drop of the spirit as thus drawn by the Sound-current from the ocean of physical existence, loses its separate entity and becomes one with the latter. Though one may hereafter continue to be in the world, to spin out his allotted span of life, he is a *Jivan Mukta* (a liberated being or a depersonalised spirit). He is no longer a bounded slave of the mind and the senses, but is now firmly established in Godhood, basking perpetually in the Divine inner Light, listening to the Divine Music in his soul. The detailed instructions in this three-fold *Atam Sidhi* or spiritual practice, are given by the Master, to every *Sadhak* (aspirant) at the time of initiation.

By Simran and Dhyan the sensory currents in the body gradually get collected and concentrated at the centre of the spirit between the two eyebrows. From here the spirit is led on by the Sound-current and after traversing the various planes, reaches Its Native Home *Sachkhand* or *Muqam-i-Haq*, which is the source and the fountainhead of the Sound-current itself. This is *Moksha, Nijat, Nirvana* or *Salvation*, in the true sense of the word.

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